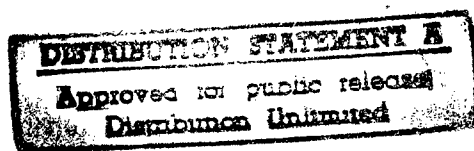


JPRS-UMJ-89-005
7 APRIL 1989



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JPRS Report



Soviet Union

Military History Journal

No 11, November 1988

DTIC QUALITY INSPECTED 2

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SPRINGFIELD, VA. 22161

Soviet Union

MILITARY HISTORY JOURNAL

No 11, November 1988

JPRS-UMJ-89-005

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7 April 1989

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MILITARY HISTORY JOURNAL

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They Stood to the Death

00010004a Moscow VOYENNO-ISTORICHESKIY
ZHURNAL in Russian No 11, Nov 88 (signed to press
26 Oct 88) pp 3-10

[Article, published under the heading "Security Classification Lifted," by Col Gen L.M. Sandalov: "They Stood to the Death"; from the book by L.M. Sandalov "Boyevyye deystviya voysk 4-y armii v nachalnyy period Velikoy Otechestvennoy voyny" [Combat Operations of 4th Army in the Initial Period of the Great Patriotic War], Moscow, Voenizdat, 1961; for the start of the series see: VOYENNO-ISTORICHESKIY ZHURNAL, No 10, 1988. Polish toponyms are in Russian transliteration]

Preparation of 4th Army to Repel Nazi Aggression

Combat Training of the Troops

[Text] Up to the autumn of 1940, less than full-scale exercises prevailed in the tactical training of the troops, as had been the case in the previous years. The offensive of the rifle subunits and units was usually supported as a convention by battalion and more rarely regimental artillery designated by a single gun and sometimes by markers. The divisional artillery regiments and the anti-aircraft artillery battalions were positioned separately from the rifle regiments, in the spring they were taken off to special camps and for this reason did not train in joint actions with the rifle troops. There were no tanks in the rifle divisions. In tactical exercises at times the close support tank groups were designated by tractors or armored vehicles. The transmitting of radiograms in exercises in the border divisions was prohibited due to the fear of interception. Only the exchange of radio signals was permitted.

In working through the defensive actions of the subunits and units, even more artificiality was permitted. Minefields were not set out, trenches and communications trenches were not organized, while the digging or designating of so-called cell trenches were carried out but these subsequently were not employed during the war. The organization of the defensive was not worked out with the involvement of the tank units and subunits.

The command personnel and the staffs of all levels, including the army staff, was unable to command the troops with the aid of radio and was not fond of this type of communications due to the difficulties of employing it in comparison with wire communications.

In the exercises, chief attention was paid to the correctness of the taken decision, to its wording and drawing up. Troop command on the basis of the taken decision was

little worked on. The command personnel had virtually no experience in the command of entire formations, units and subunits with all the combat equipment and rear services.

To the detriment of the training of the subunits and units, the personnel for an extended time was involved in building the border defensive works, housing, dumps, messes, stables, firing and shooting ranges, tank driving ranges, sports facilities and so forth. After the moving of the troops up to the new frontier, a large amount of the personnel, in addition, was diverted from combat training for guarding the numerous dwarf military dumps and standing daily detail....

On the basis of the experience of the Soviet-Finnish War in the autumn of 1940, in the troops of the border military districts, the Combat Training Directorate of the Red Army conducted demonstration detachment exercises under the slogan "Teach the Troops to Act As In a War and Only As Will Be Necessary In a War." The exercises were conducted directly under the leadership of the people's commissar of defense. Such exercises were also conducted in the 4th Army in the area of the Brest artillery range. In the well organized demonstration exercises, the rifle regiments were brought up in full strength, with the rear subunits, and had close support tank groups (using the 29th Tank Brigade) and advanced behind the shell bursts of the supporting artillery (behind a rolling barrage). Cellular trenches were dug on the defensive. Wire obstacles and minefields (using training mines) were set out on individual sections. Radio equipment was widely employed.

Later similar exercises were conducted under the leadership of the army command and the formation commanders in all the army units. However, all the prewar exercises in terms of their overall concepts and execution oriented the troops chiefly to breaching fortified positions. Maneuvering offensive actions, meeting engagements, the organizing and conduct of the defensive under difficult situational conditions were virtually not worked on. Moreover, the coordination achieved in the exercises between the subunits and units was soon disrupted, as a majority of the rank-and-file and a significant part of the assigned officer personnel were discharged into the reserves before the next call-up of men for military service.

After the arrival of the newly inducted rank-and-file the winter training period was carried out using subunits the personnel of which was over one-half replaced.

In June 1941, at tactical training exercises the shaping up of platoons was conducted in the rifle divisions of the 4th Army. The detachment, regimental and divisional exercises in the border formations were to be carried out according to the combat training plan only in the autumn and only with reduced strength.

During the period of the training of the soldier and the squad, not enough work was provided to train the troops for the event of actions under extraordinary circumstances. In the border troops, no provision was made for operating time of the tanks, tractors and motor transport for conducting such exercises. The allocated motor time was completely used for conducting routine combat training.

Only the commander of the military district had the right to completely alert a division for checking its combat readiness.

Generally, the combat training of the border troops under the conditions of the need to maintain them in constant combat readiness cannot be considered normal. This was carried out almost in the same manner as in the interior military districts.

Staff Training

The training of the army staff, the staffs of the corps, divisions and units was carried out according to plan and regularly. The command-staff exercises and field trips over the entire winter period and spring of 1941 were conducted exclusively on offensive subjects. The enemy was designated following the German establishment, but the methods of enemy actions were played out without considering the state of the German Army of those times.

The command-staff exercises, as a rule, were conducted bilaterally, unilaterally and also without designating the troops and the rear services. No effort was made to work out the organization of cooperation between the army staff and the corps staffs with aviation.

In the autumn of 1940, according to the plans and under the leadership of the General Staff, a major staff military game in the field with communications was conducted in Belorussia. This game involved the headquarters of the military district (in the role of the front headquarters) and the army headquarters. According to the initial situation, the enemy was concentrated opposite the Western Front with significantly superior forces and went over to a decisive offensive. The 3d, 4th and 10th Armies of the Western Front, in covering the concentration and deployment of the front's main forces, with heavy fighting retreated from line to line, conducting brief counterstrikes with the mechanized formations with limited aims in order to provide an opportunity to prepare a defensive line for the troops or eliminate the threat of encirclement. The retreat continued approximately to the line of Slonim, Pinsk from which the covering armies, together with the arriving and deploying fresh armies went over to a counteroffensive, they defeated the enemy, pushed it back to the frontier and established conditions for the next stage of the offensive operation.

As can be seen from what has been stated, the situation in the exercise was created very close to the conditions of the start of a war with Germany but, unfortunately, this military gain had a major drawback. In it basic attention was paid not to organizing the repelling of an enemy offensive but rather to conducting a counteroffensive.

In March-April 1941, the staff of the 4th Army was involved in a district operations game using maps in Minsk. A front offensive operation was worked through from the territory of Western Belorussia on the axis of Belostok, Warsaw.

At the end of May, an army field trip was conducted and this ended with a map game. An offensive operation was played out from the region of Pruzhany, Antopol, Bereza-Kartuzskaya on the axis of Brest, Byala-Podlyaska. Here the XXVIII Rifle Corps advanced in cooperation with the Pinsk Naval Flotilla.

Finally, on the eve of the war, on 21 June 1941, there ended the two-level command-staff exercise organized by the army staff for the XXVIII Rifle Corps on the question "A Rifle Corps Offensive With the Crossing of a River Obstacle." For the last week of June, the district staff had prepared a game for the staff of the 4th Army also for an offensive operation.

Consequently, all levels of staffs in the 4th Army could be considered prepared for troop command with the development of events in a normal situation (a slight retreat of the army, the prompt moving up of troops from the interior of the district and their joint going over to a counteroffensive in the aim of pushing the enemy back behind the state frontier). The staffs of the units and formations, like the army staff, turned out to be unprepared for troop command under the difficult situational conditions after a surprise attack by superior enemy forces, when operations assumed a strictly maneuvering nature in the entire zone of the army and developed simultaneously to a great depth.

Reorganization and Rearming of the Army Troops

In the 4th Army, as in the remaining armies of the Western Special Military District and the other border districts, in the spring of 1941, upon the decision of the VKP(b) [All-Union Communist Party (Bolshevik)] Central Committee and the USSR Council of People's Commissars [SNK] extensive organizational measures and rearming of the troops were carried out.

The necessity of the designated major measures was dictated by the ever-growing threat of military threat by Nazi Germany on the Soviet Union.

The basic task of the reorganization of the troops and their rearming was to establish large mechanized formations (corps) and eliminate the separate tank brigades, to establish artillery antitank brigades, to increase the number of artillery regiments of the RGK [High Command

Reserve] and sharply reduce the cavalry formations (corps and divisions), to create brigade air defense regions and reduce the personnel in the rifle divisions while maintaining the former number of artillery weapons and a significant reduction in rifle weapons.

From April 1941, the 4th Army began constituting the XIV Mechanized Corps (the 22d and 30th Tank Divisions and the 235th Motorized Division) as well as corps units (a motorcycle regiment and a signals battalion). The 22d Tank Division was constituted on the basis of the 29th Separate Tank Brigade in Brest, and the 30th Tank Division on the basis of the 32d Separate Tank Brigade in Pruzhany. The 205th Motorized Division was reconstituted in Bereza-Kartuzskaya. For constituting it they assigned the rifle, artillery and special subunits of the 42d Rifle Division and for a tank regiment, the tank subunits of the 29th and 32d Separate Tank Brigades.

The howitzer regiments of the tank divisions were fielded from the howitzer subunits of the 4th Army rifle divisions.

Such mechanized corps were also constituted in the other armies of the district. On the boundary of the 4th and 10th Armies, they constituted the XIII Mechanized Corps which was included in the 13th Army and assigned as a second echelon in the Cover Region No. 3.

All the mechanized corps were subordinate to the armies only in operational terms.

The corps being constituted began to receive the new KV and T-34 tanks. However, before the outbreak of the war these had been received only by the VI Mechanized Corps which was deployed in the zone of the 10th Army. The XIV Mechanized Corps had only the T-26 and T-38 obsolete tanks which had been received from the 29th and 32d Separate Tank Brigades. By the start of the war, neither the constituting nor the rearming of the mechanized corps had been completed.

The artillery antitank brigades in the zone of the 4th Army were not constituted. They were organized in the neighboring armies. These brigades had received new 85-mm cannons for weapons but there was less than 50 percent of the tractors for them.

In the zone of the army, at the district range to the southwest of Baranovichi in the spring of 1941, there were 480 152-mm guns for constituting ten RGK artillery regiments. It was unable to establish and organize these regiments before the outbreak of war.

In the corps antiaircraft artillery battalions the 76-mm antiaircraft cannons were being replaced by 85-mm ones.

In the spring of 1941, the district had begun constituting brigade air defense zones (Kobrin, Belostok, Grodno). The Kobrin Brigade Air Defense Zone was organized in the area of the 4th Army. It included permanent air

defense units (separate air defense battalions of the RGK armed with 85-mm antiaircraft guns), battalions and separate VNOS [air alert] companies.

The rifle divisions in April 1941 were also converted to new TOE. The number of personnel was reduced by 15.6 percent (14,500 instead of 17,000), the number of horses by 28 percent, motor vehicles by 32 percent, rifles and carbines by 12.4 percent, machine pistols by 23.6 percent. The number of medium machine guns, guns and mortars of all calibers remained as before in a division (150 mortars with a caliber from 50 to 120 mm, 54 45-mm cannons, 12 37- and 76-mm antiaircraft guns, 34 76-mm guns and 44 122- and 152-mm howitzers). The division became less cumbersome and more maneuverable. For antitank defense, a division could employ 88 guns (battalion artillery and 76-mm cannons). The artillery regiments of the divisions and all the artillery of the rifle regiments remained horse-drawn. All the separate artillery battalions and in certain rifle divisions also the howitzer regiments were converted to mechanical traction. In the artillery regiments of the rifle divisions, as in the corps artillery regiments, the obsolete equipment was replaced by new 122- and 152-mm howitzers and 76-mm cannons.

There were plans to supply the divisions with antitank mines but, unfortunately, this measure was not carried out.

The aviation divisions which in operational terms were subordinate to the armies had also begun to be rearmed. First of all, new aircraft began to be delivered to the 9th Composite Air Division of the adjacent 10th Army. The 10th Composite Air Division of the 4th Army received its first new types of aircraft only in mid-June 1941.

Consequently, the state of the troops during the last 3 months before the war was characterized by major organizational changes and by a start of their rearming.

The carrying out of such an important measure, unfortunately, started very late and by the moment of Nazi Germany's attack was incomplete. The rearming of the troops was to be complete only in 1942. This was a major miscalculation on our side. The miscalculation was exacerbated by the fact that the logistically unsupported reorganization and rearming of the troops were carried out simultaneously in all the Western border districts. For instance, the tank brigades many of which had combat experience in the Soviet-Finnish War (the 29th Tank Brigade of the 4th Army and others), were sent to constitute mechanized corps and the latter could not be completely constituted and rearmed.

Moreover, the measures carried out, particularly the constituting of the mechanized corps and the RGK artillery regiments, were subordinate solely to the interests of the offensive, without considering that they might also have to conduct a defensive. The field, antitank artillery and tanks in their units of fire had an insignificantly

small amount of armor-piercing shells while the rifle troops did not have any antitank and antipersonnel mines and obstacle building equipment.

One must also consider as a major mistake the fact that the constituting and reconstituting of the units and formations were carried out directly in the border regions. This led to a situation where at the moment of the outbreak of the military conflict they were almost incapable of fighting and at the same time these troops had been given battle tasks under the cover plans.

Engineering Support

The first and main defensive line in the army's zone was the Brest Fortified Area, the first position of which was built along the eastern bank of the Western Bug River and followed the configuration of its channel. In June 1941, construction was carried out on the works only on the first position of the fortified area. Construction of facilities had not even commenced in the interior of this region.

The forward defense area, as a consequence of the fact that the structures were being built along the river bank, had not been completed, with the exception of the section in the area of Drokhichin, where according to the terrain conditions permanent firing emplacements [DOT] had been built a certain distance away from the bank.

As a total in the fortified area, by 21 June, some 128 DOT had been concreted. Certain of the concreted structures had reinforcing, weapons had been installed in them sent from the Mozyr Fortified Area. By the start of the war, only 23 of the DOT were combat-ready (with garrisons, weapons and ammunition, but without communications equipment): eight in the Brest area, chiefly in the fortress area, three to the south of Brest, six in the area of Drokhichin and six in the area of Semyatich.

Of the three machine gun-artillery battalions numbering 350-400 men each, they were deploying five battalions of 1,500 men each. The rank- and-file for their constituting had only begun to arrive, while the officer personnel was arriving from the district artillery units, in particular 66 officers from the 4th Army. The untrained personnel which arrived to man the battalions being constituted was incorporated for now in the 16th, 17th and 18th Machine Gun-Artillery Battalions. The weapons and even the uniforms for the newly arrived men had not yet come.

For building the field positions, the entire border zone was divided into battalion areas which were to be equipped consecutively: initially those to be occupied by the troops upon the alert and subsequently the others, depending upon their importance. From May 1941, one rifle battalion from each of the division's rifle regiment worked on building the defensive structures in the border zone.

The positions which were built in the form of strong-points and battalion centers consisted of wood-earth and partially rubble-stone structures as well as from trenches and an insignificant amount of obstacles. The trenches were built predominantly in the form of individual rectangular cells for one or two men, without communications trenches and without camouflaging; the antitank obstacles were established only on individual areas in the form of antitank pits and dragon's teeth. The antipersonnel obstacles were not mined. There was an insignificant number of command the observation posts and shelters.

The field positions were equipped better than the others in the zone of the 6th Rifle Division, and somewhat less strongly in the area of the 75th Rifle Division and completely badly in the zone of the 42d Rifle Division, as its rifle battalions each month had changed the areas where the fortifications were to be built.

The work of the field reinforcing of the Brest Fortified Area and the equipping of the field positions on the left flank of the army in the zone of the 75th Rifle Division from the start of June 1941 was carried out at an accelerated pace. Upon orders from the district, two battalions from each of the division's rifle regiments were now assigned for defensive work.

In the army's zone there were two railroad bridges (Brest and Semyatich) across the Western Bug River and four rebuilt and working road bridges (Drokhichin, Koden, Domacheva and Vlodava). These bridges were under the guard of the 89th (Brest) Border Detachment which, although part of the RP-4 [4th Army] had not received any orders to prepare these bridges for destruction. As a result, on the very first day of the war, all the crossings and bridges over the river were captured by the enemy intact.

The rear army defensive lines, as was already pointed out, were not established in the prewar times. Prior to the war they had completed the reconnoitering of two army lines: along the Yaselda River and along the Shara River.

Thus, in engineer terms the defensive zone of the 4th Army was poorly prepared, and on the very first day of the war was crossed rather easily by the enemy. Where our troops were able to take up ready permanent structures, they put up stubborn and extended resistance to the enemy (the 16th and 17th Machine Gun-Artillery Battalions). Unfortunately, there were few such structures.

Materiel Support

Emergency stores. In June 1941, all the units of the army had a portable supply of rifle cartridges in boxes stored in the subunits. A transportable supply of ammunition was stored at dumps for each subunit.

The district artillery directorate sent another half unit of fire to the rifle divisions (with the exception of the 75th Rifle Division) and the corps artillery regiments, in addition to the one unit of fire of shells and rounds indicated in the cover directive.

Here, regardless of the protests by the staff of the 4th Army, the district artillery supply bodies sent to the 6th and 42d Rifle Divisions the dumps of which were located in the Brest Fortress a significant amount of ammunition above that indicated.

Then, considering that the enemy aviation or artillery could easily destroy such a large amount of supplies in the event of war, on 21 June the district sent the army staff the following telegram:

"To the commander of the 4th Army. In the emergency stores of the 6th and 42d Rifle Divisions, in addition to the 1.5 units of fire, there also are: 34 railroad cars of ammunition in the 6th Rifle Division and 9 cars in the 42d. This surplus must be immediately removed from Brest by at least 30 km to the east."

Naturally, such an amount of ammunition could not be removed in a short time (several hours before the start of the war).

The army had over two loads of fuel for all existing vehicles.

The emergency supply of food and fodder at the dumps for the main food products had reached 15 daily rations with the exception of meat.

Due to the fact that the rear bodies and transport of the units and formations in peacetime were in reduced strength and also undermanned, they were unable to muster more than one-half of their emergency supplies (ammunition, fuel and food).

Supply storage areas. Ammunition, food and fuel for the 6th and 42d Rifle Divisions as well as for the 447th Corps Artillery Regiment were stored at dumps in the Brest Fortress and partially in the city of Brest; for the 455th Corps Artillery Regiment in Pinsk; for the 49th and 75th Rifle Divisions at their own divisional dumps. One unit of fire for the tank divisions was stored in the units and two units of fire—for the 22d Tank Division—at the divisional dump on the territory of the Brest Fortress, and for the 30th Tank Division in Slobodka. There were very few armor-piercing shells in the units of fire for the tank units.

There were no supplies of ammunition for the artillery regiments and mortar subunits being organized in the divisions of the XIV Mechanized Corps. The fuel supplies for the divisions of the mechanized corps were stored: for the 22d Tank Division (two loads) at the fuel and lubricants dump in Pugachev, 3 km from their positions, and one load at the division; for the 30th Tank

Division all three loads were in Slobodka, 6 km from their position; for the 205th Motorized Division two loads in the division. Food supplies for them were stored, respectively, in Brest, Pruzhany and at the 205th Motorized Division.

Location of district dumps. The district dumps assigned to the army formations and units were located as follows: ammunition (one unit of fire each) at the district artillery dumps in Bronna Gura (13 km to the northeast of Bereza Kartuzskaya) and in Pinsk; fuel (three loads each) at the district dumps in Oranchitsy (12 km to the southeast of Pruzhany), Kobrin, Cheremkha, Lakhva (70 km to the east of Pinsk); motor vehicle and armored supplies at the 970th District Dump for Motor Vehicle and Armored Supplies in Brest; engineer supplies at the district dump in the Minsk area; communications supplies at the district dump in the Baranovich area; food at the district dumps No. 821 in Brest and No. 8209 in Luninets.

The hospital facilities on the army's territory for the first period met the army's needs. Hospitals were located in Brest, Cheremkha, Kobrin, Bereza Kartuzskaya and Pinsk; the 719th Medical Dump was in Pinsk.

In the last days before the war, the district staff decided to evacuate the district military hospital from the Brest Fortress. This decision was late and it was only partially carried out. The Brest Railroad could not provide a sufficient number of cars.

Thus, the existing supplies of ammunition, fuel and food completely supported the carrying out of the initial operations by the army troops. But the location of the dumps with these supplies cannot be considered satisfactory. The concentrating of a larger portion of them in areas directly adjacent to the frontier created a threat of their rapid destruction all the more as there was not enough transport in the formations and rear bodies for the simultaneous mustering of all supplies.

The army and organic rear service by the start of the war, in essence, did not have a clear organization. The rear units and subunits in the formations and units were understrength in personnel and transport even according to the peacetime TOE. They were not involved or only partially involved in all the exercises, as a rule. Even upon a combat alert, in the units and formations for loading the emergency supplies, a small amount of transport and personnel were assigned and these could only "depict loading." All the plans were based on the notion that with the outbreak of a war, the rear units and subunits would obtain personnel and transport under the mobilization.

On the eve of the war, the army did not have its own army rear units and facilities as well as army motor transport.

Command, Control and Communications

In the half of June 1941, alternate command posts were prepared with communications centers: for the army staff in Bukhovichi, to the northeast of Kobrin, where the combat engineers together with the army signal troops, had rebuilt light dugouts which had held the staff of the 4th Army during the front field trip in 1940; for the staff of the XXVIII Rifle Corps in Zhabinka; for the staff of the XIV Mechanized Corps in the forest to the north of Tevli.

A command post in the Vysokoye area had been readied for the headquarters of the 62d Fortified Area. From here there was a direct telephone link with the army staff and the commanders of the 16th, 17th and 18th Machine Gun-Artillery Battalions.

Contact of the army staff (Kobrin) with the headquarters of the XXVIII Rifle Corps, the 6th and 42d Rifle Divisions (Brest and Brest Fortress) before the war was carried out over the permanent wires of the civilian communications lines assigned for this purpose; with the 49th and 75th Divisions periodically over leased wires and by courier; with the 39th Bomber Regiment of the 10th Composite Air Division (Pinsk) and with the district staff (Minsk) over a permanent wire.

Contact with the staffs of the XIV Mechanized Corps and the 10th Composite Air Division was provided directly, as they were located in the same point with the army staff. The army staff did not have constantly operating radio communications with the superior and inferior levels and with adjacent units.

The situation was particularly bad for communications equipment in the mechanized corps. The corps staff had only six radio-equipped tanks and one 5-AK radio supplied from the army signals battalion; there was no wire communications equipment.

(To be continued)

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Both Russians and Non-Russians

00010004b Moscow VOYENNO-ISTORICHESKIY
ZHURNAL in Russian No 11, Nov 88 (signed to press
26 Oct 88) pp 11-18

[Article, published under the heading "Soviet Military Art," by Col A.I. Ismailov, candidate of historical sciences: "Both Russians and Non-Russians (From the Experience of Training Officer Personnel in the Central Asian Military District in the War Years)"]

[Text] With the outbreak of the Great Patriotic War, the Army and Navy had a sharply increased need for officer personnel. This was caused by the broad deployment of the Armed Forces and by the significant combat losses.

By the end of 1941, around 75 percent of the reserve officers had already been mobilized.¹ However, the military schools were the main source providing officer personnel.

In accord with the instructions of the VKP(b) [All-Union Communist Party (Bolshevik)] Central Committee, the People's Commissariat of Defense [NKO] on the third day of the war had worked out a plan for the training of command and supervisory personnel and this envisaged the early graduating of students from the academies and officer candidates from the military schools, the enlarging of the network and capacity of schools and the changing of the programs in line with a switch to a shortened period of instruction. Due to the measures adopted it was possible to successfully carry out the difficult task of the mass training of command, political and military-technical personnel. As a total during the war years, over 1,253,000 commanders were graduated from the VUZes, various courses and schools of the USSR NKO.² More than 402,000 officers underwent training in advanced training courses and academies. The military political schools provided the Army and Navy with 300,000 middle- and senior-level political workers.³

The Central Asian Military District (SAVO) in 1941-1945 played an important role in the training of officer personnel. During that period it included units and formations, military schools and institutions located on the territory of Central Asia and Kazakhstan.

In the autumn of 1941, many military schools of the NKO were evacuated there. Prior to the war, the SAVO had only the Alma-Ata and Tashkent Infantry Schools. By the very end of the first war year, officers for the front were being trained here in 9 military academies, 2 military institutes, on military faculties under 2 civilian institutions of learning as well as in approximately 30 military schools. In September 1942, the Higher Special Courses for Navy Command Personnel were moved from Astrakhan to Samarkand.⁴ In addition, the Higher Military Hydrometeorological Institute of the Soviet Army and 3 scientific research institutions of the NKO were relocated into Central Asia.

The command and political directorate of the SAVO, the local party and soviet bodies took every measure so that the military schools successfully carried out the main task of providing high-quality and continuous training of officer personnel for the operational army. Thus, the Military Academy imeni M.V. Frunze which was the oldest in the USSR Armed Forces, immediately upon arrival in the capital of Uzbekistan, was named the Courses Under the Central Committee of the Communist Party (Bolshevik) of this republic and also received certain quarters for billeting the students. "It was very difficult to provide such a number of persons arriving in Tashkent almost unexpectedly with everything necessary for studies and life: there were not enough classrooms, dormitories, and the food situation was even more

difficult. The government of the Uzbek Soviet Republic came to the aid of the academy. Under those conditions it did everything possible so that the academy would function normally."⁵

The RKKA [Worker-Peasant Red Army] Military Academy of Mechanization and Motorization was relocated to Tashkent at the beginning of November 1941. On the third day, its students had started studies.⁶

Upon arrival in the city of Samarkand, the necessary conditions were established for the Artillery Academy imeni F.E. Dzerzhinskiy and the Military Medical Academy imeni S.M. Kirov for their normal operation. According to a decision of the party gorkom and the executive committee of the city soviet, three school buildings were allocated for these academies and for the Higher Special Courses of Naval Command Personnel. Together with the local party soviet and military bodies, in a visit to the Higher Courses, the Deputy People's Commissar of the Navy, Lt Gen I.V. Rogov, settled the questions of providing the amenities for the personnel and improving the housing and everyday conditions for the servicemen families.⁷

The conditions for planning work and everyday activities were able to be created for many military schools evacuated to Central Asia and Kazakhstan. The party and soviet bodies on the spot paid constant attention to them. For example, the Aktyubinsk Party Obkom Buro on 6 March 1942 reviewed the question of the facilities at the 14th Artillery Special School. Having judged the situation normal, the party obkom buro at the same time obliged the appropriate organizations to initiate maximum measures to provide everything necessary for its students and not permit a single instance of an interruption in supply. The obkom buro also adopted a decision to allocate 450 pairs of leather footwear and 300 belts from local resources to the school.

The Podolsk Artillery School arrived in Bukhara in October 1941. From there its chief and military commissar reported that "the general facilities of the school provide completely satisfactory combat training, the local party and soviet bodies are providing the greatest possible aid and are providing the necessary materials for repair and construction work, with 19 apartments being provided for the families of the officers."⁸ The report of the Chief of the Military Academy of the Rear Services and Supply, Lt Gen P. Davydov, and the Chief of the Political Section, Col A. Lukyanchenko, pointed out that the academy in Tashkent "was provided with the best buildings for training and scientific purposes and all conditions were created for fruitful work of all the personnel. Due to this literally on the second day normal training commenced in the academy."⁹

At the beginning of the winter of 1941, the Selishche, Serpukhov and Stalingrad Air Mechanics Military Schools were evacuated to Kazakhstan. They were located, respectively, in North Kazakhstan, Kzyl-Orda

and Kustanay Oblasts. The local party committees, the soviet and military bodies actively aided these schools in accommodating the personnel. Over December of that year, the Kustanay Party Obkom Buro and the executive committee of the oblast soviet twice reviewed and adopted specific measures aimed at improving the domestic conditions of the military aviators. For the latter, in particular, the quarters of the oblast party courses and a number of school buildings were vacated. In addition, from local supplies the aviation school received building materials and electrical equipment.¹⁰

By the end of 1941, as was reported by the SAVO deputy commander for air forces, Hero of the Soviet Union, Col N.P. Kamanin, Uzbekistan had become the location of: the Kremenchug and Armavir Aviation Schools, the Tambov Pilots School, and the Ryazan Higher Navigators School (respectively, in the towns of Khavast, Namangan, Dzhizak and Karsha). "In Karsha we were met cordially....," recalled the chief of the Ryazan Higher Navigators School, Hero of the Soviet Union, Lt Gen Avn A.V. Belyakov, later, "many various quarters and apartments were vacated for us...and the main instructions came from the First Secretary of the Uzbekistan CP Central Committee, Usman Yusupov...we soon felt ourselves at home and continued our combat work."¹¹

The Chuguyev Air Pilots School from the autumn of 1941 was located in Chimkent. "Several days before the October holidays," the thrice Hero of the Soviet Union, Mar Avn I.N. Kozhedub, and who at the beginning of the war was an instructor pilot wrote subsequently, "we arrived in the green picturesque town of Chimkent, the last point on a long journey. Here we were to assemble the aircraft at the airfield and then fly them to Mankent, where our squadron would be based."¹² Some seven squadrons were relocated to Chimkent on the first trains. The school personnel at that time numbered around 5,000 men, including 411 communists and 2,350 Kom-somol members. According to the decisions of the Southern Kazakhstan Party Obkom, the oblispolkom and the city leadership, the school was assigned two buildings for the quartering of the staff, the mess and the officer candidates.¹³

The military air schools of the SAVO worked intensely and at a combat pace; in 1942, these numbered approximately 20 schools.¹⁴ During the war years they trained 8,000 pilots, more than 2,000 navigators and several thousand aviation specialists.

The number of students in the courses at the Military Engineer Academy imeni V.V. Kuybyshev in October 1941 had increased by 20-fold in comparison with the prewar times.¹⁵ The Kirghiz CP (Bolshevik) Central Committee (First Secretary A.S. Vagov), the government of this republic (Chairman of the Kirghiz SNK [Council of People's Commissars] T. Kulatov) and the Frunze Party Gorkom (First Secretary A.I. Vaskov) provided great aid in the billeting and logistic support for the academy personnel. The faculty was supplied with food

products from the local resources and was also given plots of land for a subsidiary farm.¹⁶ The Military Engineer Academy imeni V.V. Kuybyshev and the Military Institute of Physical Culture imeni Lesgaft were located in Frunze until October 1943 and trained officer personnel for the Army and Navy.

During the period of establishing the pilots school in the capital of Kirghizia during the autumn of 1941, the CP Central Committee and the republic government in a short period of time provided the school with barracks facilities, classrooms and messes and its leadership with housing. Seven airfields were built. The new military school also obtained a sufficient number of tanks for aviation fuel.¹⁷ This can be seen in the report by the leaders of the designated aviation school.

It is essential to emphasize that in the military schools and in the district courses under the difficult wartime conditions it was possible rather successfully to resolve the questions of training command officers. In August 1945, a report by the Directorate of Military Schools Under the Main Personnel Directorate of the USSR NKO mentioned among the "strong and best supplied" schools the Tashkent, Frunze, Alma-Ata, Ashkhabad, Tambov (Semlupalatinsk) and Odessa (Uralsk) Infantry Schools.¹⁸

The instructors worked hard and the students studied with initiative and tenacity. The military schools evacuated to the rear areas lived a full life. Frontline experience was quickly introduced into the officer training practices. Its assimilation was the aim of two scientific practical conferences conducted with the instructors, students and scientific workers of the higher institutions of learning and scientific institutions: in Tashkent, in the RKKA Military Academy of Mechanization and Motorization in May 1942, and in Samarkand in April 1943. At the conference in the academy, among the speakers a majority was comprised of frontline officers who in October 1941 had made up around 60 percent of the total number at the command faculty and in 1943, already 85 percent.

The exercises in the academies and schools were organized considering maximum use of combat experience and the practical organization of cooperation between the combat arms. A significant portion of the training time was assigned to working out problems in the field, at the tank driving ranges and in the vehicle fleets. The graduate of the First Turkestan Machine Gun School (Kushka) in 1943 and now the Deputy Commander of the SAVO, Hero of the Soviet Union, Lt Gen S.K. Nurmagambetov, in his recollections about training during these years has written: "Although the school was young, it had good training facilities and excellent domestic conditions. We were instructed by skilled and demanding commanders. They did everything so that we, thousands of kilometers from the front, would learn everything and do everything as was required there, in the very crucible of the war."¹⁹

For the 18 months during which the Military Academy imeni M.V. Frunze was located in Tashkent, there were several graduations held for command officers for the front. From April 1942, a 4-month period of instruction was set for this institution of learning and a 12-hour workday was introduced. Under the academy they also had accelerated courses for the retraining and advanced training of officer personnel. In 1941 alone, this sent around 3,000 officers to the army, and over all the war years, approximately 11,000. The RKKA Military Academy of Mechanization and Motorization over the first 2 months in evacuation trained and sent to the front 1,675 tank commanders and 476 political workers for the armored troops who had undergone training at the courses under the academy.²⁰

At the front the graduates of the military academies successfully commanded subunits, units and formations. For example, Lt Col A.Kh. Babadzhanian who completed courses under the Military Academy imeni M.V. Frunze, subsequently became a prominent Soviet military leader while Lt Col P.D. Guduz, Maj I.Ya. Brayko, Capt G.T. Zavizion and others showed great commander ability, they became generals and they worked or are working fruitfully in the system of military VUZes.

The 14 infantry and machine gun-mortar schools in the SAVO and the district Vystrel [shot] courses over the first 2 years of the war trained approximately 42,300 officers and 8,000 political workers. In addition, from the officer candidates some 63,000 men were sent to man units being constituted.²¹ During this period, just the Kharkov Infantry School which had been evacuated to Namangan provided the front with 3,482 officers and 183 political workers. Some 6,373 of its graduates became Red Armymen and junior commanders in the units being constituted in the district.²²

From November 1941, Samarkand successfully trained personnel for the armored troops at the Second Kharkov Tank School. A commission headed by the Deputy Inspector General of the RKKA GABTU [Main Motor Vehicle and Armored Directorate], Maj Gen Tank Trps I.G. Lazarev, in receiving the graduating exams, commented that "the school in the new area has developed completely into a major training organization and there are all conditions for the effective training of tank commanders." In the exams the knowledge of a majority of the graduates (over 92 percent) was judged to be good and outstanding.²³

During the exams in December 1942, the graduate officer candidates at the Tambov Artillery School (Semlupalatinsk) showed a readiness for practical service in the troops. Over 72 percent of them had received outstanding and good grades for all subjects in the exams.²⁴

Immediately upon arrival in Chirchik, the First Kharkov Tank School commenced intense training for the officer candidates. The main task in the activities of the commanders, political workers and instructors at the school

was to train officers dedicated to the Leninist party and to the Soviet motherland and who had a thorough knowledge of and could skillfully employ armored equipment in combat. Of the 2,600 men who completed it in 1942, around 80 percent passed the graduate exams with good and excellent grades.²⁵

The tank officers from the Tashkent Tank School went valiantly into battle. Some 56 of them became Heroes of the Soviet Union. Among them were G. Skleznev, V. Shalandin, V. Martekhov, I. Merzlyak and Ye. Utkin who have been entered in perpetuity in the rolls of the officer candidate companies. For accomplishments in the training of tank commanders, in November 1943 the school was awarded the Order of Lenin.

In the capital of Soviet Turkmenistan, the Ashkhabad Infantry School trained combined-arms commanders. Over the years of the war it turned out 11 graduating classes of officers (around 3,000 men). In addition, the school sent 5,400 junior commanders into the operational army. The graduates of the Ashkhabad Infantry School fought valiantly. Over 5,000 of them received orders and medals. Some 4 were awarded the Gold Star of the Hero, and on 23 February 1944, the school itself received the Order of the Red Banner.²⁶

The Kharkov Military Medical School, in being located in Ashkhabad from October 1941 until the war's end, trained over 3,100 medical officers, including 130 feldshers and pharmacists who were representatives of the indigenous nationalities of Central Asia. On the occasion of the 10th anniversary of its formation and for accomplishments in training medical service personnel, on 31 March 1945, the school was awarded the Diploma of the Presidium of the Turkmen Supreme Soviet.²⁷

At the Volchansk Military Aviation Mechanic School which was evacuated to the Tajik capital, a significant number of officer candidates was sons of the peoples living in this republic. In 1942-1943, 354 of them became aviation mechanics, including 10 Tajiks.²⁸

The best trained contingent was constantly sent to the military schools. From June 1941 until 1944, some 42,439 representatives of Kazakhstan were admitted to the ranks of officer candidates and 8,146 of the young people were Kazakhs.²⁹

The district military schools took an active part in the constituting of units and formations for the front. The newly established brigades and divisions were filled out from the officer candidates of the schools and the positions of junior commanders manned. Thus, on the basis of the basic training aviation pilots school (Frunze) by the beginning of December 1941, four air regiments had been constituted. With the active aid of the soviet and party organizations of Kirghizia, they were completely provided with everything necessary and were dispatched to the front.³⁰ From the officers trained in

the district Vystrel courses, over 700 out of the almost 3,000 were sent to positions of platoon and company commanders of the units being constituted in the SAVO.³¹

The command and political directorate of the SAVO, in relying on the help of the local party committees and the soviet bodies, quickly organized instruction for political worker cadres and the training of political workers for the units and subunits of the national formations. The Voronezh Military Signals School (Samarkand) and the Kharkov Military Political School (Tashkent) trained, respectively, 183 and 200 Uzbeks. Workers from the Samarkand and Tashkent party obkoms participated in conducting exercises in these schools along with officers from the political directorate and staff. As a result, 40 people completed the Voronezh School having outstanding grades for all subjects while 97 Uzbek soldiers upon graduation were given thanks for conscientious training and exemplary conduct.³²

By an order of the SAVO commander, in seven military garrisons, including in the capitals of the Central Asian Republics, 10-day courses were organized for training the deputy political instructors in the national units. Training was undergone by 1,290 men, 750 of whom were assigned to the minority rifle platoons while the remainder were appointed to the minority cavalry divisions.³³ They were communists and Komsomol members sent by the local party committees.

The USSR Armed Forces multinational in composition, during the war years on a large scale began to receive soldiers of non-Russian nationalities. Thus, in May 1942, in the operational fronts and fleets, soldiers from the Soviet republic comprises 5.5 million persons, including 1.2 million Georgians, Azerbaijani, Armenians, Uzbeks, Kazakhs and Kirghiz. According to a decision of the VKP(b) Central Committee, the RKKA Main Political Directorate significantly increased the training of political workers from non-Russian nationalities.

The communist party central committees of the Central Asian Republics and Kazakhstan, together with the district political directorate, selected the best trained communists for political work in the troops. Among those sent by the Karakalpak party obkom in September 1942 to military schools were the secretaries of the party raykoms and section heads, workers from the political sections of the MTS [machine-tractor station], the rayispolkoms and oblast ideological institutions, including Kh. Primbetov who in 1936 had completed the Central Asian State University and was an experienced journalist and editor of the newspaper KZYL-KARAKALPAK-STAN, M. Kalimbetov and T. Tlegenov, secretaries of the Karakalpak obkom of the Uzbek Komsomol.³⁵ From Kazakhstan in February 1942, 214 reserve political workers were sent for training, including 20 persons to the Military Pedagogical Institute and 120 persons to the Kharkov and Bryansk Military Political Schools.³⁶

During the period of the constituting of the minority cavalry divisions and rifle brigades in the Central Asian Republics and Kazakhstan (November 1941—February 1942), a number of commanders and political workers underwent retraining in the district VUZes, and deputy political instructors were trained for these nationality formations. For example, by the start of 1942, the Tashkent Cavalry School (Chirchik) and the Military Political School (Leninabad) were training 125 communists and Komsomol members sent by the Tajikistan CP(b) Central Committee³⁷ and from Uzbekistan, 525 persons who subsequently were sent to fill out the nationality divisions and brigades.³⁸ Over 500 men from among the Uzbek Komsomol aktiv underwent training in the district schools and became deputy political instructors in the nationality units.³⁹ The district military VUZes provided significant aid to the party committees in the training and retraining of reserve officers, in propagandizing military knowledge among the public and in work with the inductees. On the basis of the military academies and schools, the local party, soviet and military bodies conducted assemblies and special exercises with the reserve officers as well as other measures to instruct persons liable for military service. In the aims of training leading republic workers, for example, by a decision of the Uzbekistan CP(b) Central Committee, in December 1942, 6-week courses were organized at the Military Academy imeni M.V. Frunze. Here experienced instructors trained 130 men from among the party, soviet and economic cadres.

During the war years there were 55 military schools and courses on the SAVO territory. In addition to them, upon a decision of the Soviet government, in December 1943, a Suvorov school designed for 700 students was opened in Tashkent.

The personnel of the military schools combined intense study with active involvement in the sociopolitical and economic life of the Central Asian Republics. The commanders, political workers, the faculty, students and officer candidates of the military academies and schools regularly spoke to the workers as well as in the troop units and hospitals giving lectures and reports on military political subjects, and they conducted exercises on the military patriotic indoctrination of the youth. During the period that the agitation and propaganda collectives from the Academy imeni M.V. Frunze and the Academy of the Armored Troops were in Tashkent, some 1,600 reports and lectures were given attended by over 240,000 persons.⁴⁰

The students of the RKKA Military Academy of Mechanization and Motorization gained practical experience at the MTS of Uzbekistan. The administrations and political sections of the Akkurgan and Second Syr Darya MTS provided excellent recommendations on the work of the tank officers on the kolkhoz fields. The director of the Khavast MTS, in particular, wrote: "...The military

technicians coming from the academy have excellently mastered the maintenance of the tractors. As a result, 60 tractors were in good conditions and ready for work."⁴¹

In a report addressed to the chairman of the Uzbek SNK, the chief of the military faculty of the Moscow Signals Institute, Maj Gen Sig Trps A. Karaulov, pointed out the active aid of the students and co-workers of the faculty under the leadership of Doctor of Technical Sciences, Maj Gen Tech Trps I.G. Klyatskin, in successfully carrying out the governmental quotas. Some 16 men of this group were awarded diplomas of the Presidium of the Uzbek Supreme Soviet.⁴²

Thus, the difficult situation on the fronts and in the rear at the start of the war, although disrupting the planned work of the military schools, was unable to halt this. The great organizing activities of the district command, the party and soviet bodies of the Central Asian Republics and Kazakhstan contributed to the ongoing supply of the operational army with officers of various specialties. Moreover, the training process was steadily improved and as a result of this the Army and Navy received highly skilled officer personnel. Thousands of commanders and political workers who graduated from the military schools located in the SAVO in fighting showed high organizational abilities, political maturity, professional skill and total dedication to the Soviet motherland and they made a worthy contribution to victory over the Nazi invaders.

Footnotes

1. "Sovetskiye Vooruzhennyye Sily" [Soviet Armed Forces], Moscow, Voenizdat, 1978, p 296.
2. TsAMO SSSR [Central Archives of the USSR Ministry of Defense], folio 54, inv. 12301, file 305a, sheet 20.
3. "Velikaya Otechestvennaya voyna 1941-1945: Entsiklopediya" [The Great Patriotic War of 1941-1945: An Encyclopedia], Moscow, Sovetskaya Entsiklopediya, 1985, p 159.
4. TsGA Uz. SSR [Central State Archives of the Uzbek SSR], folio 837, inv. 27, file 329, sheet 43; file 185, sheets 61-90.
5. "Voyennaya akademiya imeni M.V. Frunze" [The Military Academy imeni M.V. Frunze], Moscow, Voenizdat, 1980, p 125.
6. TsGA Uz. SSR, folio 837, inv. 27, file 185, sheet 187.
7. Partiyyny arkhiv Samarkandskogo obkoma partii (PASO) [Party Archives of the Samarkand Party Obkom (PASO)], folio 31, inv. 1, file 2331, sheet 13; TsGA Uz. SSR, folio 837, inv. 27, file 329, sheet 43.
8. TsAMO, folio 158, inv. 12836, file 1, sheets 61, 75; TsGA Uz. SSR, folio 837, inv. 27, file 185, sheet 50.

9. TsGA Uz. SSR, folio 837, inv. 27, file 371, sheet 1.
10. Partarkhiv Kaz. filiala IML [Party Archives of the Kazakh Affiliate of the Marxism-Leninism Institute], folio 708, inv. 5, file 1125, sheets 72, 74; file 2283, sheet 125; file 2284, sheet 46.
11. A.V. Belyakov, "V polet skvoz gody" [A Flight Through the Years], Moscow, Voenizdat, 1982, pp 320-321.
12. I.N. Kozhedub, "Vernost Otchizne" [Loyalty to the Fatherland], Moscow, Voenizdat, 1975, p 121.
13. TsAMO, folio 158, inv. 12819, file 8, sheet 201.
14. Ibid., file 44, sheets 225-233.
15. See: A.M. Iovlev, "Deyatelnost KPSS po podgotovke voyennykh kadrov" [Activities of the CPSU in Training Military Personnel], Moscow, Voenizdat, 1976, p 155.
16. TsAMO, folio 32, inv. 11289, file 155, sheet 5.
17. TsGA Kirg. SSR [Central State Archives of the Kirghiz SSR], folio 350, inv. 14, file 130, sheet 516.
18. TsAMO, folio 54, inv. 12301, file 305a, sheet 21.
19. S.K. Nurmagambetov, "Litsom k ognyu" [Facing the Fire], Alma-Ata, 1984, p 17.
20. TsAMO, folio 158, inv. 12819, file 154, sheet 46.
21. Ibid., folio 54, inv. 12301, file 236 (calculated from the school forms).
22. Ibid., sheets 71-73.
23. Ibid., folio 158, inv. 12836, file 1, sheets 97, 100.
24. Ibid., inv. 123016, file 126, sheet 5.
25. Ibid., inv. 12819, file 3, sheet 26a.
26. Partarkhiv Turkmenskogo filiala Instituta marksizma-leninizma (PA TF IML) [Party Archives of the Turkmen Affiliate of the Marxism-Leninism Institute (PA TF IML)], folio 1, inv. 22, file 33, sheet 6; A.V. Terentyev, "Vo imya zhizni na zemle" [In the Name of Life on Earth], Ashkhabad, 1985, p 152.
27. PA TF IML, folio 1, inv. 22, file 33, sheet 6.
28. PA Tadzh. F IML [Party Archives of the Tajik Affiliate of the Marxism-Leninism Institute], folio 3, inv. 12829, file 49, sheet 355.
29. TsAMO, folio 158, inv. 12829, file 49, sheet 355.
30. TsGA Kirgiz. SSR, folio 350, inv. 14, file 130, sheet 516.
31. TsAMO, folio 158, inv. 12819, file 152, sheets 18, 32, 71, 119, 165.
32. Ibid., folio 32, inv. 11289, file 122, sheets 76-77; file 170, sheet 45.
33. PA Kaz. F IML, folio 708, inv. 5, file 1125, sheets 8, 21.
34. "Sovetskiye Vooruzhennyye Sily. Voprosy i otvety" [The Soviet Armed Forces. Questions and Answers], Moscow, Politizdat, 1987, p 308.
35. PA Uz. F IML [Party Archives of the Uzbek Affiliate of the Marxism-Leninism Institute], folio 58, inv. 18, file 178, sheet 199; file 251, sheets 85-88.
36. TsAMO, folio 32, inv. 11289, file 177, sheet 100.
37. PA Tadzh. F IML, folio 3, inv. 125, file 176, sheets 196-197.
38. TsAMO, folio 158, inv. 12819, file 170, sheets 44-45, 76-77, 188-189.
39. PA Uz. F IML, folio 15, inv. 24, file 3978, sheets 17-145.
40. "Uzbekskaya SSR v gody Velikoy Otechestvennoy voyny" [The Uzbek SSR During the Years of the Great Patriotic War], Tashkent, Vol 2, 1983, pp 180-181.
41. TsAMO, folio 158, inv. 12819, file 154, sheet 48-49.
42. TsGA Uz. SSR, folio 837, inv. 27, file 239, sheet 189.
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- Reflections on Fate of Military Leader**
00010004c Moscow VOYENNO-ISTORICHESKIY
ZHURNAL in Russian No 11, Nov 88 (signed to press
26 Oct 88) pp 19-27
- [Article, published under the heading "From Unpublished Manuscripts," by Lt Gen N.G. Pavlenko, doctor of historical sciences, professor: "Reflections on the Fate of a Military Leader (Notes of a Military Historian)"; continuation, for first installment see Issue No. 10 of this magazine for 1988]
- [Text] Georgiy Konstantinovich Zhukov was at work for almost 10 years on his book, but he was unable to complete it as he wished. The last 5 years of the military leader's work on his memoirs coincided with the initiating of a campaign to "liquidate the mistakes in the fight against the cult of personality" (the second half of the 1960s). For this reason, contrary to the author's position,

many critical ideas were discarded from the manuscript relating to the activities of I.V. Stalin, the repressions, shortcomings and mistakes in the war and so forth.

Even before the publishing of the memoirs of G.K. Zhukov, the leadership of Central Committee Headquarters had various viewpoints on the military leader's work. For example, the member of the CPSU Central Committee Politburo, A.M. Suslov, who during those years was in charge of ideology felt that no cuts should be made in the content of G.K. Zhukov's book. It was better not to publish it at all. L.I. Brezhnev had a different view. He ultimately gave permission for publication. But before this happened, rather thorough "work" was done on it by two groups of editors (from the Main Political Directorate of the Soviet Army and Navy and from the Military Scientific Directorate of the General Staff). Overall supervision over their activities was provided by one of the closest associates of L.I. Brezhnev, S.P. Trapeznikov.

According to the evidence of the editor of G.K. Zhukov's memoirs, A.D. Mirkina, his work after the editors had suffered irreparable losses: "These involved primarily the chapter written by G.K. Zhukov on the repressions of 1937 against the superior command personnel of the Red Army. The brilliant description given by G.K. Zhukov to the very talented Soviet military leaders such as M.N. Tukhachevskiy, I.P. Uborevich, I.E. Yakir, A.I. Yegorov, V.K. Blyukher and many others...his personal impressions on dealing with these military leaders whom he took as an example and from whom he learned military strategy and tactics...this chapter did not survive."¹

It was further pointed out that under the influence of the times (the developing campaign to overcome the mistakes in combating the cult of personality of I.V. Stalin), the accents were shifted in the description of I.V. Stalin, in assessing the degree of our preparedness for the war as well as a number of other questions.

Zhukov had his own viewpoint on the content of the memoirs. He felt that they should be concerned with his deeds, his thoughts and those events which he saw or experienced. The memoirs of the commander of a front, particularly a representative of Headquarters, in his opinion, should scarcely contain combat episodes, which he frequently did not know and had not even heard of at all. The skillful saturating of memoirs with such episodes does not describe the activities of a front commander and "the abuse of this appears as false democracy and false playing up."² But the editors proceeded in their own way. In accord with the instructions from S.B. Trapeznikov, they incorporated and crossed out everything they considered essential. We have mentioned the deletions above but what did they add to the text of the memoirs? As one of the leaders of the editor group, M.Kh. Kalashnik recalled, they "eliminated" the underestimation of party political work in the memoirs of

G.K. Zhukov. But they eliminated this so-called "underestimation" in their own manner: they incorporated in the text of the military leader's memoirs combat episodes concerning the heroism of soldiers and officers and included in his book the names of political workers many of whom Georgiy Konstantinovich had not even met during the war.

Probably the most humorous instance is the prehistory to the appearance of the name of L.I. Brezhnev in the military leader's book. Here is what A.D. Mirkina had to say recently on the pages of the journal OGONEK.³ In her words, "the manuscript ready for setting was not sent for a long time. Finally, it was made to be understood that L.I. Brezhnev wanted Mar G.K. Zhukov to mention him in his book." But the trouble was that during all the war years they had not met once on any of the fronts. What should they do? And then they wrote, recalled A.D. Mirkina, that while present in the 18th Army of Gen N.K. Leselidze, Mar Zhukov had supposedly gone to "consult" with the chief of the army political section, L.I. Brezhnev, but, unfortunately, he had not been there. "He was precisely at Malaya Zemlya, where the heaviest fighting was underway."⁴

G.K. Zhukov here had made a concession, saying with a bitter rejoinder: "The intelligent will understand." And in order that this episode included in the book appear more natural, they also incorporated in it several names of the chiefs of army political sections, including, of course, one of the leaders of the editor group, the former chief of the Political Section of the 47th Army, M.Kh. Kalashnik.

Undoubtedly, the editors greatly worsened the memoirs of the military leader. At present we can only regret this. Let it be hoped that there still will be a time when the initial version of the marshal's memoirs will be published.

In working on his memoirs, Georgiy Konstantinovich realized that the reader would expect a great deal from him as the former chief of the General Staff, hoping to finally gain a reasonable answer to the question of why our army, in possessing such great capabilities, suffered a defeat in the border zone and was forced to retreat into the interior of the nation. Mar G.K. Zhukov answered this burning question although not completely. The essence of it ultimately comes down to the incompetence of the military leadership. In his opinion, he personally was unprepared to carry out the duties as chief of the General Staff. However, no one considered his reticence to assume this position. The People's Commissar of Defense S.K. Timoshenko and the "greatest of the great" I.V. Stalin also had a very poor understanding of the particular features of preparing and conducting operations in the initial period of the war.

The nature of the military leader, in being fully apparent in the course of the fighting, to a definite degree was also apparent in his memoirs. In them one can see the critical

approach to assessing events and leaders, self-criticalness, directness and honesty of judgments. Certainly in our military memoirs there are few works which in terms of the richness of content and self-criticalness could be put in the same rank with the memoirs of Mar G.K. Zhukov. Below we give individual critical comments of the military leader on the most important questions of preparing for the operations in the initial period of the war.

1. The divorce of practice from theory. "...The military theory of those years," wrote G.K. Zhukov, "as expressed in the works and literature and reinforced in the regulations, basically was, as they say, on the level of those times. However, practice to a certain degree had left theory behind...."⁵ The lag was expressed primarily in the fact that the military theorists, in analyzing the development trends of military affairs, were unable to correctly determine the nature of armed combat in a future war and its initial period, to generalize the experience of strategic deployment, and bring forth new methods of the entry of the army into an engagement in the initial period of a war. For example, it was felt that the simultaneous commitment of the main forces of the operational army to battle, as employed by the Nazi Command in a number of campaigns (in Poland, Western Europe and the Balkans) would be a typical method of advance in the initial period of a future war. At the same time, in the words of G.K. Zhukov, the People's Commissariat of Defense [NKO] and the General Staff assumed that a war between the USSR and Germany would start in the same manner as World War I, that is, the main forces would enter battle several days after the border engagements.⁶ Such a view entailed an erroneous grouping of our troops.

2. The frequent replacing of the chiefs of the General Staff before the war and at its start. Thus, from the summer of 1940 until the summer of 1941, the chiefs of the General Staff were changed four times (B.M. Shaposhnikov, K.A. Meretskov, G.K. Zhukov and then again B.M. Shaposhnikov). In the brief stay in such a complicated and crucial post, of course, neither K.A. Meretskov nor G.K. Zhukov was able to successfully master his duties. For example, G.K. Zhukov was the head of the General Staff for just 4 1/2 months. During this period, the superior military leadership, including himself, committed a number of major errors, and with the start of combat, there were even more of them. The military leader rightly pointed out that all these errors were the consequence of the lack "in all of us of sufficient experience in troop leadership in a difficult situation...."⁷

3. The underestimating of the defensive as a type of strategic operations. The immediate strategic goal for the troops in our border districts was to rebuff the enemy attacks and establish favorable conditions for retaliatory strikes. Consequently, military operations in the initial period of the war, it was assumed, were to be carried out in two stages: at the first the defensive and in the second the offensive. Obviously, without having repulsed the

enemy strike, there could be no question of going over to the offensive. At the same time, immediately before the war the questions of preparing and conducting defensive actions had been pushed into the background. Defensive actions usually were worked out and studied on operational-tactical limits. Our leadership did not even give any thought to a strategic defensive which was imposed on us by the enemy in the summer of 1941. For example, at the December meeting of the higher command personnel in 1940, Army Gen I.V. Tyulenev gave a report on the nature of the modern defensive. But this report, according to the intention of the General Staff, "did not go beyond the limits of an army defensive and did not disclose the specific features...of a strategic defensive."⁸ The underestimating of the defensive in the higher spheres of our military leadership was one of the reasons that the Soviet troops were unprepared to repel the enemy aggression.

4. A scientific assessment of the real facts was replaced by statements of the "great leader." According to intelligence data, at the beginning of May 1941, over 100 German divisions were concentrated close to our frontiers. And a large portion of these forces, including three panzer groups out of the four, was to the north of Polesye. In the following weeks, significant German troop contingents in moving up from the interior also were sent here. These facts showed that the enemy was preparing for its main strike on the Smolensk-Moscow axis. However, the real facts were repudiated in favor of an erroneous version of I.V. Stalin who felt that the enemy would launch the main thrust to the south of Polesye. "I.V. Stalin for us was the greatest authority," recalled G.K. Zhukov, "and no one at that time dreamed of doubting his judgments."⁹ A similar situation was observed in many other instances. During this period the military command still did not dare to defend its professional views before the "omniscient and wise leader."

5. Little consideration of the experience of the Nazi armies during the campaigns in Europe. The strong assault groupings of the German armies possessed great piercing capability. Because of this, armed combat lost its former linearity and assumed an in-depth nature. The large panzer groupings, in pushing into the deep rear of the defending enemy, cut its lines of communications. Such actions by the enemy did not catch the attention of our nation's military leaders. They ignored this experience and under the conditions of the approaching war felt it necessary to move up material and equipment closer to the troops and closer to the users. "Seemingly this was correct," wrote G.K. Zhukov, "but later on it turned out that we had all made a mistake on this question."¹⁰ As a result of the deep push by the enemy panzer groupings, the Soviet troops were deprived of much materiel located not only in the army and front depots but also at the central dumps. The enemy captured supplies of combat equipment, weapons, ammunition, fuel, quartermaster supplies, food and other materiel.

6. Ignoring changes in the situation. The Soviet troop grouping on the Western frontiers had been established in the autumn of 1940. At this time there were around 50 German divisions on the territory of East Prussia and Poland. In working out a plan, they proceeded from the following hypothesis: the defensive period would take up little time. In the aims of quickly shifting from the defensive to a counteroffensive, strong groupings were to be established on the Belostok and Lvov salients which extended deep to the west. By the spring of 1941, the situation had fundamentally altered. There were now over 120 German divisions in East Prussia and in the eastern regions of Poland. The pace of the arrival of new enemy divisions was increasing day by day. It was also expected that the troops of German satellites would soon be moving up to our frontiers.

Thus, a threatening situation arose for the troops in the Belostok salient. In the words of G.K. Zhukov, the 10th Army which was located there "held the worst position. Such an operational configuration of the troops created a threat of a deep envelopment and encirclement of them from the direction of Grodno and Brest by a strike in the flanks.... This erroneous positioning of the troops made in 1940 was not corrected until the war itself.... An analogous error was repeated in the armies of the South-western Front which also were late in being pulled back from under the threat of encirclement."¹¹

7. Our largest mistake was that the military leadership was very late in issuing orders to put the troops in the border districts on alert. This was issued to the troops only when it was virtually impossible to do anything. In the memoirs of the military leader, it is pointed out that S.K. Timoshenko and he repeatedly proposed to I.V. Stalin that the troops in the border districts be put on alert. But their proposals were not taken into account and caused irritation. Thus, in mid-June 1941, S.K. Timoshenko and G.K. Zhukov were with Stalin. To the proposal to bring the troops in the border districts to a full alert, he replied: "Are you proposing to conduct a mobilization in the nation, to muster the troops now and more then toward the western frontiers? This is war! Do you two understand this or not?"¹² Of course, the alerting of the troops in the border districts could have been carried out without mobilization in the nation. Those forces which existed in the border districts were clearly few for going over to the offensive, but they were sufficient to conduct defensive operations together with reserves approaching from the interior.

A major misfortune of those days was also the fact that the military-political leadership had greater confidence in its own infallibility than in the events occurring on the Western frontiers. In mid-June 1941, close to our frontiers, the Germans already had 150 divisions. Many of them had been brought up to the deployment lines. It was particularly alarming that they began to move the population out of the border zone, obstacles set up previously on the frontier were being removed, ammunition was being stored on the ground and so forth.

These and similar facts, undoubtedly, were well known to the military leadership (S.K. Timoshenko and G.K. Zhukov) but as before they continued to await instructions from I.V. Stalin.

The developing situation was more profoundly and soberly viewed in the districts and armies. There they even endeavored to carry out certain measures of a defensive nature. For example, in the Kiev Special Military District a decision was taken to have the units occupy the fortified areas of the forward defense zone and prepare for the defense. As soon as Moscow learned about this, the General Staff sent off a telegram. It, in particular, stated: "...Such actions could provoke the Germans to an armed clash." For this reason it was ordered that this decision be immediately cancelled.¹³ The level of maturity in the military-political leadership can also be seen in the fact that the General Staff was ordered within a 2-week period to plan a new reduction of 20 percent in the staffs of the central and district personnel. Rumors of this spread rapidly in the army.¹⁴ The absurd cutback in the headquarters bodies on the eve of the enemy attack was cancelled, not by the leadership but by the war.

MSU R.Ya. Malinovskiy described rather accurately the situation and state of our troops in the border districts on the eve of the war. "The requests of certain district commanders," he wrote, "to permit them to bring the troops to an alert and to move them closer to the frontier were personally rejected by I.V. Stalin. The troops continued to train as if in peacetime: the artillery of the rifle divisions was in the artillery camps and at the ranges, the antiaircraft weapons were at the antiaircraft firing ranges, the combat engineer units were in the engineer camps and the 'naked' rifle regiments of the divisions were separately in their camps. With the approaching threat of war, these major errors bordered on a crime. Could this have been avoided? It could and should have been."¹⁵ The inability of the leadership to understand the situation and its unusual laxness played the main role in the fact that the enemy attack was a surprise for the troops of our border districts. The enemy was able to achieve surprise not so much due to its military art as to precisely the major errors and mistakes by our strategic leadership.

After extended reflection the military leader voiced the following notion: "If the troops of the border districts had been brought to full combat alert ahead of time," he wrote in the memoirs, "it would have been possible to cause the enemy more significant harm in the very first days of the war and hold it longer on the western defensive lines. This would have made it possible in a more organized manner to commit to action the units arriving from the interior military districts."¹⁶

Of course, it is possible to take a differing view of this admission. In our view, it is too general and clearly smooths over the pernicious influence of the errors and mistakes of our strategic leadership. Academician A.M.

Samsonov holds a different viewpoint. "If there had not been the mistakes," he stated to a correspondent, "I do not doubt that the Wehrmacht troops, even having penetrated our territory, would not reach Leningrad and Moscow. This is the price of the error which was committed on the eve of the war."¹⁷

Of the greatest danger were those errors which were committed out of ignoring the real situation and a desire to replace a thorough analysis of it by intuitive and voluntaristic decisions. At the start of the war, we had to pay too dear a price for them. But the situation was complicated by the fact that some errors gave rise to other, constantly new ones. In this context we cannot help but mention one such errors which had serious consequences.

During the very first hours of the war, the General Staff and the staffs of the front lost command over the troops. For establishing the actual state of affairs on the fronts and for providing help to their command in repelling the enemy in the middle of the day of 22 June MSU B.M. Shaposhnikov was sent on mission to the Western Front and Army Gen G.K. Zhukov to the Southwestern Front. Their arrival at the fronts did not improve the situation but the strategic element of leadership over the Armed Forces was significantly weakened.

Our troops, in being caught by surprise, were unable on the first day of the war to repulse the strong enemy strikes and were forced to begin a retreat. By the end of 22 June, to the north of Polesye, the enemy had advanced 30-35 km and in places up to 50 km. At the same time, the General Staff Summary for 2200 hours of the first day of the war pointed out that the enemy advance had been insignificant and that "with the approach of the first units of the Red Army field troops, the attacks of the German troops on the predominant extent of our frontier had been driven off with losses for the enemy."¹⁸ The information given in it did not conform to reality.

On the basis of an incorrect assessment of the situation at 2115 hours on 22 June, the people's commissar of defense signed Directive No. 3 on the going over of our troops to a decisive counteroffensive in the aim of defeating the enemy assault groupings and shifting combat to enemy territory. On 24 June, by the end of the day, the Soviet troops were to capture the areas of Suvalki and Lublin. The task, of course, was unrealistic as in a period of 2 days it was impossible to establish even assault groupings, let alone anything else. As was to be expected, there was no counteroffensive. The uncoordinated attacks by the individual formations soon died out. By the night of 24 June, instead of shifting military operations into enemy territory, our troops had retreated a distance of from 50 to 100 km.

As is known, Directive No. 3 on the counteroffensive of the Soviet troops was signed by G.K. Zhukov. But this did not prevent the military leader from noting its fallibility. "In

setting the task of a counteroffensive," he wrote, "Headquarters of the High Command did not know the real situation existing by the end of 22 June. The command of the fronts also did not know the situation. In its decision the High Command proceeded not from an analysis of the real situation and sound calculations, but rather from intuition and a desire for activity without considering the capabilities of the troops and which in no instance must be done during crucial moments of armed combat."¹⁹ In the existing conditions, by the end of 22 June, the best method of fighting, in his opinion, would have been "counterstrikes of the mechanized corps against the wedges of the enemy armored groupings."²⁰ However, at that time the strategic leadership was relying more on intuition which turned out to be groundless and suffered from gigantomania.

Naturally, the question arises of how could S.K. Timoshenko and G.K. Zhukov who were high-class military specialists have signed such a directive. The answer to this comes from telephone conversations with G.K. Zhukov who was on the Southwestern Front and Lt Gen N.F. Vatutin his alternate on the General Staff. In the evening of 22 June 1941, N.F. Vatutin informed G.K. Zhukov that his signature was required for the directive concerning the going over to the counteroffensive. G.K. Zhukov replied to this: "But we still do not know accurately where the enemy is to launch its strikes and with what forces.... Would it not be better to study what is happening on the front until tomorrow and then take the necessary decision." N.F. Vatutin argued back: "I share your viewpoint, but this matter has already been resolved." G.K. Zhukov was left with no choice. And he said: "Alright, add my signature."²¹

The Soviet Supreme High Command did not immediately free itself of those ailments which beset it on the first days of the war. There were still relapses of ignoring the real situation, a consideration of troop capabilities was lacking and careful calculations were replaced by the demand for continuous offensive actions at any price. The consequence of all of this was the enormous losses in personnel, the disorganization of the troops, but this was not taken into account.

The disastrous style of strategic leadership was also apparent in the desire for excessive centralization in troop command and control. At the outset of the war, when troop control was not marked by stability, the importance of enterprising actions by the command of the fronts and armies was greater. But frequently this initiative was nipped in the bud. For example, after intense fighting which lasted a week, the commander of the Southwestern Front, Col Gen M.P. Kirponos took the decision: "The rifle corps are temporarily to take up the defensive along the line of the Styr and Stokhod Rivers and the population points of Kremenets, Zolochiv. The mechanized corps are to be pulled back behind this line. Over a period of 3-4 days, a powerful counterstrike is to be prepared in the aim of destroying the enemy troops advancing on the Lutsk and Dubno axes."²² And literally several hours later from Moscow

they sent: "...Headquarters prohibits the retreat and demands the continuation of the counterstrike. The aggressor is not to be allowed quiet even for a day...."²³

An analysis of the situation of those days on the South-western Front shows that the decision by M.P. Kirponos was proper. As for the strategic leadership, at that time it was consumed by the idea of offensive actions and neglected the defensive. In demanding high activeness from the troops, it was hoping that something would result from this. MSU V.D. Sokolovskiy has termed this activeness "playing at giving away."

During meetings with G.K. Zhukov, the questions of the initial period of the war were raised repeatedly. He answered them approximately as he later wrote in his memoirs. In truth, in conversations the marshal showed greater frankness and self-criticalness. The longest conversation with the military leader on the questions of the initial period was held by us in the summer of 1966. At that time, the editors of VOYENNO-ISTORICHESKIY ZHURNAL decided to publish an article on the 70th anniversary of Georgiy Konstantinovich. The initial version of it was to be prepared by the journal's deputy editor-in-chief, Col M.V. Kravtsov and the chief of the Editorial Section, Col N.A. Svetlishin. Col V.M. Kravtsov and I visited Georgiy Konstantinovich.

Our conversation was held in the large but basically abandoned garden which surrounded his home in Sosnovka. After clarifying certain biographical data, we moved on to reviewing the questions of the initial period of the war. The conversation was started by having us give the marshal certain data on the amount of produced combat equipment over the 2 1/2 prewar years in Nazi Germany and in our nation. The figures on the production of equipment in the USSR had been taken from his manuscript.²⁴

According to this information, the industry of Nazi Germany produced 20-26 percent less tanks of all types than did ours and for field guns the figure was 2-2.5-fold less. Only for aircraft did it produce approximately as much.²⁵

Georgiy Konstantinovich affirmed that the Soviet nation had more human resources and combat equipment than did Nazi Germany together with its satellites. But the German groupings surpassed the Soviet troops in forces in the border districts. This was a consequence of the major miscalculation by the General Staff and the NKO which had underestimated the enemy's capabilities.²⁶ The marshal, however, rebuked historians for the fact that for a long period they had been unable to figure out the statistics and pointed to differences in the figures in different works. At the same time, he considered it an error not to see those advantages which the enemy had. Among these G.K. Zhukov put: the possession of initiative in actions, qualitative enemy superiority in aviation, the good skills of the enemy and the teamwork of the headquarters bodies as well as the presence of combat experience among all the Wehrmacht personnel.

In the course of the conversation, we asked Georgiy Konstantinovich why historians had not found in the archives the report notes of the chief of the General Staff to I.V. Stalin on the need to alert the troops. He said that they (G.K. Zhukov and S.K. Timoshenko) had not written such notes but rather had reported on this orally. And he admitted that a major error had been made and the necessity of alerting the troops should have been reported to the chief of the government both in writing and orally. "Written documents," said the marshal, "are essential not only for the case and the procurator but also for history."

At one of the sessions of the editorial board of VOYENNO-ISTORICHESKIY ZHURNAL, the former chief of the Rear Services of the Armed Forces, Army Gen A.V. Khrulev, stated that G.K. Zhukov, being the chief of the General Staff, had underestimated the importance of the rear services in a modern war and that this was one of the main reasons for their complete disorganization. In the words of A.V. Khrulev, G.K. Zhukov was supposedly against the reorganization of the entire system of the rear services in the summer of 1941 during the retreat of the Soviet troops. Having related this to Georgiy Konstantinovich, we assumed that he would not agree with the judgment of the chief of the Rear Services and would repudiate it. However, our expectations were not realized. The military leader pointed out: "Andrey Vasilyevich [Khrulev] is correct on this question." And he gave an explanation: up to June 1941, he had no idea of the gigantic scale and unusual complexity of the rear services in a modern war; he became really acquainted with this only in the course of it. As for the reasons for his release from the post of chief of the General Staff, he pointed out that possibly I.V. Stalin in settling this question had in mind not only the differences of opinion over the possibility of the defense of Kiev but also the reorganization of the rear services.

Thus, in assessing the ideas of G.K. Zhukov on the preparation and conduct of the operations in the initial period of the war, we can say that they have brought us significantly closer to an understanding of the main reasons for our setbacks in that period. The major errors committed by our strategic leadership made it possible for the enemy to establish superior troop groupings, to ensure surprise of their attacks and deal major defeats to the Soviet troops in the border zone.

Footnotes

1. OGONEK, No 17, 1988, p 15.
2. VOYENNO-ISTORICHESKIY ZHURNAL, No 12, 1987, p 44.
3. OGONEK, No 18, 1988, p 19.
4. Ibid.
5. G.K. Zhukov, "Vospominaniya i razmyshleniya" [Recollections and Reflections], Moscow, Izd-vo APN, 1969, p 215.

6. Ibid., p 224.
7. Ibid., p 264.
8. Ibid., p 190.
9. Ibid., p 220.
10. Ibid., p 224.
11. Ibid., pp 263-264.
12. Ibid., p 241.
13. I.Kh. Bagramyan, "Tak nachinalas voyna" [Thus Began the War], Moscow, Voenizdat, 1971, p 76.
14. Ibid., pp 78-79.
15. VOYENNO-ISTORICHESKIY ZHURNAL, No 6, 1961, pp 6-7.
16. G.K. Zhukov, op. cit., pp 411-412.
17. ARGUMENTY I FAKTY, No 10, 14-20 March 1987.
18. "Istoriya Velikoy Otechestvennoy voyny Sovetskogo Soyuza 1941-1945" [History of the Great Patriotic War of the Soviet Union of 1941-1945], Moscow, Voenizdat, Vol 2, 1963, p 29.
19. G.K. Zhukov, op. cit., p 264.
20. Ibid.
21. Ibid., p 251.
22. I.Kh. Bagramyan, op. cit., p 140.
23. Ibid., p 141.
24. Over the period from the start of 1939 until the middle of 1941, the Soviet Army received from industry: around 30,000 field guns, over 7,000 tanks of all types (including 1,860 units of the KV and T-34 tanks), and approximately 18,000 aircraft (including 3,700 new types of aircraft). After clarification, these figures were contained in the memoirs of the marshal (see: G.K. Zhukov, op. cit., pp 205, 206, 209).
25. Over the same 2 1/2 years, German industry produced: 13,500 guns with a caliber of 76-mm and over, 5,500 tanks, 17,500 aircraft (see "Promyshlennost Germanii v period voyny 1939-1945" [German Industry During the Period of the War of 1939-1945], Moscow, Izd-vo Inostr. Lit., 1956, pp 106, 270; "Vtoraya mirovaya voyna 1939-1945" [World War II of 1939-1945], Moscow, Voenizdat, 1958, p 31).

26. In the middle 1960s, G.K. Zhukov as well as ourselves, the military historians, felt that by the start of the war the enemy was superior in men and weapons over our groupings in the border zone. At present, in line with new publications of data on the troops fighting on the south-western sector, the view of the balance of forces has been fundamentally changed. The new data, of course, will involve new assessments.

(To be continued)

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Where Did the Tanks Go?

00010004d Moscow VOYENNO-ISTORICHESKIY ZHURNAL in Russian No 11, Nov 88 (signed to press 26 Oct 88) pp 28-39

[Article, published under the heading "Debates and Discussions," by Col V.P. Krikunov, editor for the problems of the history of strategy and operational art: "Where Did the Tanks Go? (Materials and Documents)"]

[Text] In line with the debate occurring on the journal's pages concerning the initial period of the Great Patriotic War, the editors have received numerous letters from readers. They have voiced comments and requests on the published materials. In particular, the chairman of the Council of the Military Science Society Under the Nikolayev Garrison Officers Club, P. Mushchinskiy, writes: "The members of our military history section were not satisfied by the article of Yu.G. Perechnev on the events of 1941. The article, in our opinion, lacks concreteness...."

I.N. Gaponenko (Klin in Moscow Oblast) comments: "Unfortunately, he (Yu.G. Perechnev.—V.K.) has raised a mass of questions but...himself merely has repeated long known truths."

V.V. Kaminskiy (Borisov in Minsk Oblast) has raised claims against the military historians on the designated problem: "How much can one make a secret of the fact that it is possible to calculate without any special problems? I have in mind the data on the state of our army in the West on the eve of the war. The articles on the initial period of the war in Issue Nos. 4 and 5, alas, have not departed from this 'tradition'."

Maj I.Ya. Volosnik (Shchuchin in Grodno Oblast) did not agree with the author of the article (in Issue No. 6 of the journal "Remember the Lessons of History. Strengthen Combat Readiness in Every Possible Way."—V.K.) that the initial period of the war for the Soviet people was merely "severe." "The initial period of the war was a tragedy for the people. Millions of people perished, a significant portion of the Soviet territory was occupied and here the occupiers perpetrated their misdeeds and crimes.... It was severe for those who by their 'errors' created the prerequisites of this tragedy."

O.T. Savchenko (Vitebsk), A.T. Safonov (Moscow), I.P. Pevnev (Vilnius), V.M. Podennyy (Vinnitsa) and many other readers of the journal asked where the thousands of tanks of the mechanized corps in the border districts went in the initial period of the Great Patriotic War.

In answering these and other questions of our readers, we are publishing reports on the combat of certain mechanized corps and tank divisions in the Western military districts in the border engagements. The individual data have been taken from other archival documents.

Virtually until the end of 1939, the armored troops of the Red Army included tank corps consisting of 2 tank brigades and a motorized brigade (up to 500 tanks according to the TOE). However, as a result of incorrect conclusions drawn from the experience of the war in Spain and the liberation campaigns of the Soviet troops into the western regions of Belorussia and the Ukraine, by a decision of the Main Military Council of 21 November 1939, these corps were inactivated.

The commenced World War II showed the erroneousness of such a decision. For this reason, on 9 June 1940, the People's Commissar of Defense approved a plan for constituting new mechanized corps. According to it, by the end of the year, 9 mechanized corps had been organized. In February-March 1941, they began constituting another 20 consisting of 2 tank divisions and a motorized division with a TOE numbering 1,031 tanks each. This involved a new mistake: no consideration was given to the present and possible delivery of combat vehicles, repair facilities, technical and command personnel. By the start of the Great Patriotic War, there were 20 mechanized corps in the Western border military districts. They had around 10,150 tanks of various makes, including 1,475 of the IV and T-34 types. A number of corps (IX, XI, XIII, XVIII, XIX and XXIV Mechanized Corps) numbered from 220 to 295 tanks, basically the old makes (there were only 31 KV and T-34 in the XI Mechanized Corps and, respectively, 11 in the XIX). Due to the small number of vehicles (respectively, 36 and 93) the XVII and XX Mechanized Corps were not mechanized formations.¹ For example, in the report to the chief of the Main Motor Vehicle and Armored Directorate (GABTU) of the Soviet Army, Lt Gen Tank Trps Ya.N. Fedorenko, on the combat of the XVII Mechanized Corps (commander, Maj Gen M.P. Petrov), it was pointed out: "On 22 June 1941, the corps had only 36 tanks and 480 trucks.... The available number of vehicles belonged to the training fleet. This caused the employment of the tank divisions as rifle ones while the insufficient saturating with antitank weapons, automatic weapons and small arms made them unworkable as rifle ones.

"The lack of transport and communications equipment impeded the movement of the units and their control.

"All the same, the corps for a month, in retreating, has been fighting continuously with the enemy mechanized units."²

As can be seen from the above, there were few tanks of the KV and T-34 type. This was explained primarily by the fact that they were commissioned in December 1939. Naturally, industry had been unable to produce them in a sufficient amount in a short period of time. Continuing in service were the obsolete makes of tank, the BT and T-26, which had a range of 40-150 motor hours and this did not provide for the conduct of extended fighting. Moreover, by the start of the war 29 percent of them required a major overhaul and 44 percent a medium overhaul.³ There was a major shortage of motor transport and tractors. The total strength level of them was, respectively, around 39 and 44 percent.⁴

It is essential to point out that the corps being constituted received basically commanders from cavalry and infantry units and they did not have skills in leading the tank units and subunits. The report of the commander of the IX Mechanized Corps, Maj Gen K.K. Rokossovskiy, on the combat training of the corps for the winter training period of the 1940-1941 training year emphasized: "The command and supervisory personnel still does not have firm skills and abilities in commanding their unit (subunit), as in their majority the commanders have worked little in their positions and they have not been able to gain experience in the short period (February-March) (1941.—V.K.) and learn."⁵ There were also other shortcomings: the poor teamwork in all levels of staffs, the acute shortage of ammunition, particularly armor-piercing shells, the mass output of which had still not been organized and so forth.

Thus, by the beginning of the Great Patriotic War the battleworthiness of the mechanized corps in the Western border districts was very limited due to their low strength level in terms of combat equipment, motor transport and auxiliary vehicles, trained command personnel and manpower as well as as a consequence of the lack of ammunition. Such a situation was the result of a major mistake expressed in the simultaneous constituting of a large number of mechanized corps.

There were also shortcomings in the planning of the combat employment of the mechanized corps. A majority of them in the Western border military districts was assigned to the combined-arms armies covering the state frontier. Thus, out of the 20 mechanized corps in the districts, 11 were subordinate to the cover armies.

In accord with the overall plan for covering the state frontier, the mechanized corps comprising the cover armies, with the onset of combat, were to be concentrated in the planned areas ready to launch counterstrikes against the enemy which had breached the defenses. The mechanized corps which were subordinate to the fronts were not given specific missions. They were to be used depending upon the situation in the course of the commenced combat.

The disposition of many mechanized corps did not correspond to the plans of the command. As was pointed out in a brief operational-tactical essay on the combat of

the armored and mechanized troops of the Western Front in the border engagement, "the XIII and XIV Mechanized Corps were positioned in direct proximity to the frontier, while a tank division located in Brest was within the range of enemy artillery fire. It took much more time for the XIII and XIV Mechanized Corps to reach the forming-up position than it did for the enemy under the conditions of the surprise attack to travel from the frontier to the positions of these corps."⁶

In a review of the combat of the XIV Mechanized Corps (commander, Maj Gen S.I. Oborin), it was pointed out: "On 0400 hours on 22 June, the 22d Tank Division (Brest) came under surprise heavy artillery shelling causing the destruction of a portion of the combat vehicles and a large amount of auxiliary vehicles; an ammunition and fuel dump was destroyed and up to 20 percent of the personnel and families was wounded and killed. Upon the alert the 22d and 30th Tank Divisions set off for the assembly area. The corps staff had suffered losses in personnel and without the signals battalion (destroyed) set off for the command post. Concentration in the assembly area was carried out under heavy enemy air action. By the end of 22 June, the tank division had taken up the defensive on a line of Zervershi—Shevka."

Due to the discrepancy in the disposition of the formations of the mechanized corps to the tasks arising with the start of hostilities, during the first days of the war they had to execute major regroupings. This was also caused by the ignorance of the commanders and staffs of the fronts and armies of the real situation and by their taking of decisions which did not correspond to the existing situation in their defensive zones (Document 1). The commander of the VIII Mechanized Corps, Lt Gen D.I. Ryabyshev, has written: "During the period...from 22 through 26 June 1941, the corps, in carrying out intense 'above-forced' marches without observing the elementary prescribed requirements of maintaining the materiel and resting the personnel, was brought up to the battlefield, with the combat materiel having covered a distance of 500 km. As a result of this, for technical reasons 40-50 percent of the combat vehicles was out of commission (this was aggravated by the fact that by the start of the war the old combat equipment had consumed 50 percent of the motor life). The designated 40-50 percent of the materiel was abandoned on the routes of march of the divisions. As a consequence of such rapid marches, the remaining equipment was technically unprepared for combat."

"The failure to observe the elementary prescribed standards in organizing and carrying out the marches was the main reason for the lost battleworthiness of the combat equipment." To this he added: "The absence of a traffic control service by the front and army on the most important operational routes led to the disordered movement of the troops, to the creation of 'blockages,' to an enormous amount of emergencies and accidents as well as to the useless expenditure of time on troop movement. This led, as a result, to the delayed execution of the orders."⁸

A report on the course of combat from the 37th Tank Division (commander, Col F.G. Anikushkin) to the XV Mechanized Corps stated: "Over the entire period the division has been constantly underway, making lengthy and long marches without a halt for bringing the personnel and equipment into order. As a result the divisions, in a short period of time (10-12 days) and chiefly by night marches, have traveled a distance of over 1,500 km. The absence of time to repair the equipment has led to a sharp quantitative reduction in the number of tanks due to their technical state."⁹

It must also be considered that the marches of the formations were made under conditions of enemy air supremacy. The tank and mechanized units suffered heavy losses from the continuous enemy air strikes and reached the forming-up places weakened.

A brief operational-tactical report on the operations of the Armored and Mechanized Troops of the Western Front from 22 June through 13 July 1941 stated: "The XIV Mechanized Corps for 3 days has been out of commission due to the reason of incomplete preparedness, insufficiently skillful actions, the lack of air support, the absence of antitank and antiaircraft weapons, poor cooperation with the infantry, poor organization of the rear services and support, as well as the surprise attack of the enemy and the heavy effect of its aviation."¹⁰

There were other reasons also for the tank losses. For example, Maj Gen Tank Trps A.V. Borzikov (chief of the Combat Training Directorate of the Soviet Army GABTU) reported: "The corps (V and VII Mechanized.—V.K.) are holding up well, it is merely too bad that the staffs are inefficient and inflexible and it is also bad that many vehicles are being lost to the enemy due to the malfunctioning of minor details. Neither the division, the mechanized corps, the army nor the front is able to organize repairs and salvage. There are not spare parts, there is no rubber and supplies are poor. The mechanized corps do not have any aviation and for this reason they are blind, they at times hit an empty place and lack communications between themselves. The losses of the V and VII are great. At present, the V is at Orsha and the VII at Vitebsk and to the southwest and they will fight in cooperation with the infantry. The enemy is employing the spraying of an incendiary mixture...and the tanks are set afire. The greatest losses are from aviation. Some 50 percent of the equipment has been lost and a large portion of the tanks already requires an overhaul."¹¹

In the report from the commander of the VIII Mechanized Corps, it was pointed out: "A poor knowledge of the tactics of the use and employment of the motorized and mechanized units as well as a poor understanding of the technical capabilities of the combat equipment and weapons on the part of a certain portion of the command and supervisory personnel have frequently led to mistrust of their own forces and sometimes to a vain retreat and ineffective fighting."¹² Moreover, time was not

provided to organize combat. This can be seen in the report of the command of the 37th Tank Division. "Regardless of the difficult fighting conditions in a wooded-swampy area, and in addition in the absence of infantry, combat engineers and artillery, the division has not had even a minimum of time to organize the offensive. Thus, Order No. 07/op from the staff of the XV Corps in which the division was given the task on 28 June 1941 of crossing the Styr River at Bordulyaki and Stanislavchik and to advance on the axis of the locality of Berestechko, was signed at 0430 hours of 27 June 1941, while the division received it only at 0800 hours on 28 June, that is, with a delay of over 24 hours. This situation led to the fact that the division, without any time, was unable to organize cooperation not only with the adjacent unit advancing on the left but also to provide sufficiently good cooperation between the units of the division."¹³ This is pointed out in greater detail in the conclusions on the employment and fighting of the XV and VIII Mechanized Corps (Documents 2, 3).

The tank losses in the mechanized corps in the border engagement were also related to the unsatisfactory work of the organic and operational rear services. From the very first day of the war, the system of supplying the troops with materiel was disrupted and this was particularly true of

ammunition and fuels and lubricants. The combat of the tank units and formations was to be supported by transportable supplies existing at their dumps. However, due to the shortage of containers for fuel and the unavailability of motor transport, not enough of the transportable supplies could be carried and the mechanized corps on the second or third day of fighting began to experience difficulties with ammunition and fuel.

Because of the low level of strength of the repair enterprises in terms of personnel and salvage equipment as well as due to the poor organization of maintenance for the combat equipment, the mechanized corps in the course of the fighting suffered heavy losses in tanks due to technical breakdowns.

An analysis of numerous documents submitted to the Soviet Army GABTU provides us with an exhaustive picture of the armored equipment losses and this is clearly expressed in the summary ledgers of the 8th Tank Division (commander, Col P.S. Fotchenkov) of the IV Mechanized Corps (Table 1) and the 10th Tank Division (commander, Maj Gen S.Ya. Ogurtsov) of the XV Mechanized Corps (Table 2).

Table 1: Information on the Available Combat Vehicles in the 8th Tank Division on 22 June and Their Losses by 1 August 1941*

Vehicle Make	On 22 Jun 41	Lost in Battle	Missing in Action	Stuck in Swamps	Running Time Used	Abandoned and Destroyed by Crew	Evacuated to Plant	Other Unknown Causes
KV	50	13	—	2	3	25	5	—
T-34	140	54	8	2	—	31	32	10
T-28	68	10	—	—	—	26	—	1
BT-7	31	2	1	1	—	12	3	1
T-26	36	6	1	1	—	13	5	—
BA-10	57	7	—	—	—	14	5	13

* TsAMO [Central Archives of Ministry of Defense], folio 36, inv. 11360, file 5, sheets 153, 156.

Table 2: Information on Available Fighting Vehicles in 10th Tank Division on 22 June and Their Losses by 1 August 1941**

Vehicle Make	On 22 Jun 41	Arriving on Alert	Lost in Battle	Missing in Action	Abandoned in Retreat for Various Reasons
KV	63	63	22	—	34
T-34	38	37	23	—	9
T-28	61	44	4	3	37
BT-7	181	147	54	—	46
T-26	22	19	7	3	14
Armored vehicles	83	72	24	—	27

** TsAMO, folio 38, inv. 11360, file 2, sheets 46, 64.

As is seen from the tables, the high tank losses occurred due to the above-stated reasons as well as due to the fact that they were abandoned and destroyed by the crews in retreating to the east. Is it possible to judge from these on the losses

in the mechanized corps of the Western border districts (fronts)? We feel it is. Just in the initial period of the Great Patriotic War, for example, the Southwestern Front lost 2,648 tanks out of the 4,201 available on 22 June.¹⁴

As was reported in August 1941 by the chief of the ABTU [Motor Vehicles and Armored Directorate] of the Western Front, Col Ivakin, on the territory of Western Belorussia alone, the VI, XI, XIII and XIV Mechanized Corps abandoned around 2,100 tanks (100 percent) for various reasons and this included 383 KV and T-34.¹⁵

Maj Gen Tank Trps V.T. Volskiy in a report described in the greatest detail all the shortcomings leading to enormous tank losses in the employment of the mechanized corps during the initial period of the war (Document 4).

Document 1

Report of the Commander of the 7th Tank Division of the VI Mechanized Corps, Maj Gen Tank Trps Semen Vasilyevich Borzilov on the State and Actions of the 7th Tank Division

(Received by Soviet Army GABTU on 4 August 1941)

1. On 22 June 1941, the division was up to strength in personnel as follows: 98 percent in rank-and-file, 60 percent for junior command and 80 percent for command personnel.

The equipment was: 51 KV, 150 T-34, 125 BT-57 and 42 T-26.

2. The supply of the division with combat gear was: 1 unit of fire for 76-mm shells, there were no 76-mm armor-piercing shells, 1.5 unit of fire for 45-mm shells, 1.25 unit of fire for all makes of cartridges, 3 loads of B-70 and KB-70 gasoline and 1 load of diesel fuel.

3. On 22 June, the division's units continued to carry out the combat training plan and were positioned as follows: the 7th ozad [separate anti-aircraft artillery battalion] at courses in Krupki (behind Minsk). Medium and light machine guns of the 7th msp [motorized rifle regiment] at courses in the area of Knyshen, the 2d Battalion of the 13th Regiment at the firing range of Selenoye. The remaining units of the division were basically in their positions of Khorosh, Novoselki and Zholtki, preparing for an exercise on 23 June 1941 and which was to be conducted by the army staff. I did not know of the assumed attack by the German Army, although the division's units were ready for battle.

4. On 20 June 1941, the corps commander conducted a meeting with the divisional commanders where they set the task of increasing combat readiness, that is, they ordered finally the supplying of shells and magazines, their placement in the tanks, greater security for the parks and dumps, the rechecking of the assembly areas for the units upon combat alert, the establishing of radio contact with the corps staff and here the corps commander warned that these measures were to be carried out without making a sensation, no one was to be told of this and the exercise continued according to plan. All these instructions were carried out on time.

5. At 0200 hours of 22 June, word was received through the liaison officer in the field of a combat alert with the opening up of the "red packet." Ten minutes later, a combat alert was announced to the division's units and at 0430 hours, the division's units were concentrated at the assembly point according to the combat alert. At 0400 hours, enemy aviation bombed Belostok, Khorosh and Novoselki but the division's units did not come under bombing, with the exception of the 13th Tank Regiment. Losses: 26 men wounded and 4 killed, the equipment did not suffer.

6. Combat actions of the 7th Tank Division. On 22 June 1941, upon orders of the corps commander, the division conducted reconnaissance with a reconnaissance battalion along the Warsaw Highway to the west. The reconnaissance did good work. Moreover, it had the task of restoring contact with units of the I Rifle Corps.

On the first day of the war the division did not have any more tasks until 2200 hours.

7. At 2200 hours on 22 June, the division received orders to move to a new concentration area near Valpa Station (to the east of Belostok) as well as the subsequent task: to destroy the panzer division which had broken through in the area of Belostok.

The division, in carrying out the order, collided with the blockages which had arisen on all the roads due to the disordered retreat of the army rear services from Belostok (a traffic control service had not been organized). The division, being on the march and in the concentration area from 0400 to 0900 hours and from 1100 to 1400 hours on 23 June, was constantly under enemy air strikes.

Over the period of the march and while in the concentration area up to 1400 hours, the division suffered losses: 63 tanks were hit, and all the rear services of the regiments were impaired and particularly the rear services of the 13th Regiment had suffered.

8. The enemy panzer division was not in the area of Belsk, and because of this the division was not employed. New information arrived: an enemy panzer division had broken through between Grodno and Sokulka. At 1400 hours on 23 June, the division received a new task of advancing in the axis of Sokulka—Kuznitsa, destroying the panzer division which had broken through and coming out in the assembly area to the south of Grodno (approximately 140 km). In carrying out the task, the division during the first half of the day of 24 June, was concentrated on a line for an attack to the south of Sokulka and Staroye Dubovoye. Intelligence had established that the enemy panzer division was not there but there were small groups of tanks cooperating with the infantry and cavalry.

On 24-25 June, the division, in carrying out the orders of the corps commander and marshal, Comrade Kulik, attacked with the 14th Tank Regiment, Staroye Dubovoye and then Grodno, while the 13th Tank Regiment attacked Kuznitsa and then Grodno from the west where up to two infantry battalions and up to two artillery batteries were destroyed.

After carrying out the task, the division's units were concentrated in the area of Kuznitsa and Staroye Dubovoye, and here the division's units lost 18 tanks as burned up and stuck in the swamps. On 25-26 June, before 2100 hours, the division was conducting defensive battle in cooperation with the 29th msd [motorized rifle division] and the 36th kd [cavalry division], and launched attacks ahead of the front of the 128th msp [motorized rifle regiment] of the 29th msd and 36th kd.

9. Fuel and lubricants were running out in the division's units and there was no chance to load up due to the absence of containers and head dumps, in truth, it had been possible to obtain one load from the burned out dumps in Kuznitsa and Krinka (generally fuels and lubricants were secured as one could). By the end of the day of 25 June, orders were received from the corps commander to retreat behind the Svisloch River but this was to be carried out only upon a special signal. According to preliminary data, the 4th td [tank division] of the VI Mechanized Corps during the night of 26 June had retreated behind the Svisloch River and as a result of this the flank of the 36th kd was exposed.

By the end of 26 June, the enemy, employing its reserve, went over to the offensive. At 2100 hours, units of the 36th kd and the 128th msp of the 29th msd began to retreat in disorder. Measures were taken to recover the situation, but this was unsuccessful. I gave orders to cover the retreating units of the 29th msd and the 36th kd in the area of Krinka and made a second attempt to check the retreating units, where it was possible to hold the 128th msp, and during the night of 27 June, I crossed the Svisloch River to the east of Krinka (this was the start of a general disordered retreat), and at this time contact with the corps staff was interrupted. It was possible to restore contact only by the end of 27 June at the crossings near Volkovysk.

The division's units constantly from Kunitsa, Sokulka to Slonim were fighting against pursuing enemy assault units. On 29 June, at 1100 hours, with the remains of the equipment (three T-34 tanks) and a detachment of infantry and cavalry, I reached the forests to the east of Slonim, where I fought on 29 and 30 June. At 2200 hours on 30 June, I moved with the detachment into the forest and then into the Pinsk swamps along the route of Vulka, Velichkovichi, Postoly, Starushka, Gomel, Vyazma.

10. The equipment was all abandoned on the territory occupied by the enemy from Belostok to Slonim. The remaining equipment was unusable. The equipment was abandoned because of the lack of fuels, lubricants and rubber supplies. The crews joined the retreating infantry.

Maj Gen Tank Trps Borzilov (signature) (TsAMO, folio 38, inv. 11353, file 5, sheets 51-54)

Document 2

Conclusions on Utilization and Actions of XV Mechanized Corps (From Brief Review of Actions of Mechanized Formations of Fronts Over the Period From 22 June Through 1 August 1941)

(Compiled on 28 January 1942.—V.K.)

The disposition of the XV Mechanized Corps in peacetime did not make it possible for the corps units to concentrate simultaneously and strike quickly on a single axis. The corps units arrived at the concentration area and entered battle at different times, without cooperation with the other units.

The routes to the concentration area had not been reconnoitered and in line with this the 19th tp [tank regiment] of the 10th td became stuck in the swamps in the area of Sokoluvka, Konty and was a whole 24 hours late.

The XV Mechanized Corps was fighting on a broad front (up to 70 km). This greatly impeded command and led to a delay in the issuing and receiving of orders and instructions. By a decision of the corps commander, the 212th msd was operating away from the tank divisions, covering the area of Brody and hence it was not possible to hold the lines seized by the tanks. Cooperation between the branches of arms was lacking because of this and a decisive success was not achieved in defeating and destroying the enemy.

The staffs of the front and the 6th Army did not inform the staff of the mechanized corps about the enemy and the corps did not have air reconnaissance data over the entire period of action.

The carrying out of long marches (about 1500 km during the entire period) and the continuous fighting, without the inspection and routine maintenance of the equipment, led to great losses due to technical malfunctions.

The frequent changing of the tasks for the corps and the greatly delayed delivery of orders from the staffs of the front and the 6th Army created confusion, a lack of clarity and an excessive expenditure of motor life. For example, on 24 June, an order was received from the front's staff for the XV Mechanized Corps to move from the line of Kolesniki, Okhladuv, Kholoyuv to an area to the southwest of Brody for launching a joint strike with the VIII Mechanized Corps on the axis of Berestechko, Dubno.

The corps units began to carry out this order and were on the way and some of them had already reached their concentration area. On 25 June, an order came for the corps units to return to the previously held line in the aim of preparing for an offensive on the axis of Radzekhov, Sokol together with the IV Mechanized Corps.

At 2300 hours on 26 June, a new order was received from the front's staff: the XV Mechanized Corps was to defeat an enemy mechanized group operating against Dubno, launching a strike on the axis of Lopatyn, Berestechko, Dubno.

On 27 June, again a new order was received and this fundamentally changed the task for the corps: to retreat into the area of the Zlochov Hills. The corps began to carry out the order, but then a new order was received from the front: "Disregarding any difficulties and the technical state of the equipment, on 28 June the corps is to advance on the axis of Berestechko." (TsAMO, folio 38, inv. 11360, file 5, sheet 31)

Document 3

Conclusions on the Utilization and Actions of the VIII Mechanized Corps

(From a Brief Review of the Actions of the Mechanized Formations of the Fronts Over the Period From 22 June Through 1 August 1941)

(Compiled on 28 January 1942.—V.K.)

The disposition of the VIII Mechanized Corps in peacetime corresponded to the deployment plans and ensured its prompt deployment for combat.

It is incomprehensible why the VIII by an order of the commander of the 26th Army, No. 002, of 17 May 1941, did not receive an independent task and it made up the army reserve.

On 22 June 1941, having prevented the corps from carrying out the order of the 26th Army, the front's commander assigned a new concentration area and put the corps under the 6th Army.

The commander of the 6th Army, not considering that the corps would carry out a march in carrying out the order of the commander of the Southwestern Front, assigned a new concentration area. Because of this order, the commander of the VIII Mechanized Corps was to turn the units carrying out the march to a new direction.

On 24 June, the commander of the 6th Army shifted the corps to a new area.

On 26 June, by an order of the front's commander, No. 0015, the corps was again shifted to a new area.

Thus, without participating in combat but rather making "super-forced" marches in a circle and carrying out successively the orders of the commanders of the 26th and 6th Armies and the front, the corps traveled an average of 495 km, having left on the roads during the marches up to 50 percent of the available combat equipment while the remaining equipment and driver personnel were worn out.

On 26 June, in carrying out the orders of the front Nos. 0015 and 0016, the commander of the VIII Mechanized Corps, without having concentrated all the units, committed his corps to battle piecemeal, without reconnaissance of the enemy and without having ascertained its position and forces. As a result of this, the units ran into a strong antitank defense and swamps and suffered heavy losses without having carried out the set task.

The actions of the corps were not covered from the air and cooperation was not organized on a front scale.

The nervousness of the superior staffs in the command and in the setting of tasks, the abundance of orders which were not coordinated, and the failure to observe the elementary prescribed standards in organizing and carrying out the marches were the main reason for the loss of battleworthiness by the corps as well as the loss of equipment. (TsAMO, folio 38, inv. 11360, file 5, sheet 28)

Document 4

Report to the USSR Deputy People's Commissar of Defense, Lt Gen Tank Trps, Comrade Fedorenko

(Compiled on 5 August 1941.—V.K.)

The Kiev Special Military District, subsequently reorganized as the Southwestern Front, had the following mechanized corps: VIII, IV, IX, XIX, XVI, XV, XXII and XXIV. Here the IV and VIII Mechanized Corps had been constituted in the autumn of 1940 and the remaining corps in April 1941. Thus, there had been extremely insufficient time for developing cooperation, all the more as in the new mechanized corps combat equipment had been lacking for a significant period of time.

In analyzing the actions of the mechanized corps, one cannot divorce them from the general situation existing on the front during the first days of the war. It would be incorrect to analyze the actions of all the troops without having studied all the material and it is possible to fall into a mistake and draw incorrect conclusions and for this reason in my report I am taking up exclusively the materials analyzed by me and submitted by the corps and divisional commanders as well as questions which I have been able to verify in personal talks with the formation and unit commanders and, finally, directly in personal observation in the course of combat, in particular, by the XVI Mechanized Corps. I conclude that the main reasons for the rapid breakdown of the tank units are the following.

1. From the first day of the war the mechanized corps were incorrectly employed, for they were all attached to armies, while the mechanized corps, I am not speaking about all of them, were a front-level weapon and naturally there could be instances of switching one mechanized corps to the individual armies, but only in those instances when the situation actually required this and this should have been done in establishing assault groups from them.

If the situation developed in such a manner that the command decided to retreat to the lines of fortified areas, in this instance they should have been occupied by infantry.

The mechanized corps should be employed compactly before the UR [Fortified Area], then they should be immediately pulled back behind the UR and then reemployed as an armored fist. What actually happened was that our units were unable to occupy the UR and the enemy entered the UR in the footsteps of the retreating troops.

2. All the combat of the mechanized corps was carried out without careful reconnaissance and certain units had completely no knowledge of what was happening in the immediate proximity. Virtually no air reconnaissance was carried out in the interests of the mechanized corps.

Command over the mechanized corps was poorly organized by the combined-arms commanders, the formations were scattered (VIII Mechanized Corps) and were separated by the moment of the offensive.

The army staffs were completely unprepared to control such large mechanized formations as a mechanized corps. The infantry, as a rule, fought independently and the situation did not make it possible to organize cooperation.

There were instances when the combined-arms commanders used the tanks not only in small groups but also as individual vehicles and this was particularly characteristic in the 41st Tank Division.

3. The army staffs completely forgot that the equipment had a certain running life, that it would require inspection, minor repairs as well as an additional replenishment of fuel and ammunition, while the technical personnel and chiefs of the army ABTO [motor vehicle and armored section] did not suggest this to them and instead, after carrying out a task, pulling back the mechanized corps, giving it time necessary for this purpose, the combined-arms commanders demanded that they come out fighting and nothing more. There was completely no cooperation with the air forces. The mechanized corps had no cover whatsoever either on the march or on the battlefield, and the question of the simultaneous working over of the forward edge by the artillery and aviation was particularly bad.

4. Information from the top downwards as well as from adjacent units was provided completely poorly.

The war from the first day assumed a maneuvering nature, the enemy was more mobile and the main thing in its actions was that it widely employed and did employ envelopments and flanking strikes. It avoided frontal engagements and immediately opposed us with mobile antitank weapons, positioning these chiefly in antitank areas, and itself carried out an envelopment from one but most often both flanks.

Our actions had the nature of a defense along a broad front and, to our great regret, the mechanized corps were forced to conduct defensive battles in individual instances in the initial period of fighting and subsequently systematically.

Our command personnel was poorly trained in peacetime precisely for analogous actions, and for this reason endeavored for a close defense with the adjacent unit, but there were not sufficient forces precisely for having such a defense.

The major shortcoming was the fact that the orders very frequently overlapped, in them specific tasks were not set at times and frequently a change in the situation immediately led to the army staffs completely losing command of the mechanized corps.

All of this concerns the combined-arms commanders.

But there were many mistakes made directly by the commanders of the mechanized units and formations. These include:

1. The staffs of the mechanized corps, the tank divisions and tank regiments still had not properly mastered an operational-tactical viewpoint. They were unable to draw correct conclusions and completely did not understand the idea of the army and front command.

2. The command personnel did not possess sufficient initiative.

3. Not all mobile means were employed which the mechanized units possessed.

4. There was no maneuverability but rather feebleness and slowness in carrying out the tasks.

5. The actions, as a rule, had the nature of frontal attacks and this led to unnecessary losses of equipment and personnel. This was because all levels of commanders neglected reconnaissance.

6. The inability to organize battle formations of the corps by axes, to cover the enemy's route of march and the enemy moved chiefly along roads.

7. Obstacles were not utilized and there was a complete lack of cooperation with the engineer troops.

8. No attempt was made to deprive the enemy of the opportunity for delivering fuel and ammunition. They made no practice of ambushes on the main axes of enemy actions.

9. Enemy actions against the flanks led to the fear of being surrounded while the tank units had nothing to fear from encirclement.

10. Large population points were not employed to destroy the enemy and there was the inability to operate in them.

11. Command and control, starting from the platoon commander up to the major commanders, were poor, radios were poorly used, covert command of the troops was poorly organized, and a great deal of time was wasted on encoding and decoding.

12. The training of the crews was exceptionally poorly organized on the questions of protecting the equipment. There were instances when the crews abandoned vehicles which had ammunition and there were individual instances when the crews abandoned the vehicles and went on foot.

13. All the units and formations lacked salvage equipment and the available equipment could support the mechanized corps and tank divisions only in offensive operations.

14. The personnel did not master the new equipment, particularly the KV and T-34, and had not learned at all to make repairs under field conditions. The repair facilities of the tank divisions were unable to carry out repairs in such fighting as a retreat.

15. A large percentage of the command personnel did not know the tasks, it did not have maps and this led to a situation where not only individual tanks but entire subunits became lost.

16. The mechanized corps even in peacetime did not have rear maintenance units and in training very little attention was paid to this question.

17. The then existing organization of the rear services was exceptionally cumbersome. The assistant commander for technical affairs, instead of working on the equipment, as a rule, was left in the second echelon with the rear services. The rear services had to be cut back, leaving in a mechanized corps only equipment for delivering fuel, ammunition and food.

18. Army damaged-vehicle collecting points, as a rule, were not organized and no one directed their work. The lack of a TOE organization for evacuation equipment led to a situation where the salvaging of combat equipment, as a rule, was lacking in the army and front rear.

19. The chiefs of the army ABTO performed only supply functions and they were unable to fully carry out these. The personnel of the army ABTO chiefs was very meager and did not ensure troop command. Their recruitment was very poorly organized and as a result the ABTO chief of the 6th Army was removed from the position held as incompetent.

20. The staffs were poorly trained and manned, as a rule, by combined- arms commanders who had no work experience in tank units.

21. Many persons were in command of the mechanized corps: the front gave tasks, the army gave tasks and the commanders of the rifle corps gave tasks. This is most clearly shown in the employment of the 41st Tank Division of the XXII Mechanized Corps.

22. A portion of the commanders in the mechanized corps were not up to their job and had completely no idea of how to command them.

23. In the higher institutions of learning (academy) they had never worked through those types of combat which they would have to encounter and this was a major shortcoming in the operational-tactical viewpoint of a majority of the command personnel. Deputy Commander, Maj Gen Tank Trps Volskiy (signature) (TsAMO, folio 38, inv. 11360, file 2, sheets 2, 8-13)

Footnotes

1. Calculated from: VOYENNO-ISTORICHESKIY ZHURNAL No 7, 1988, p 45; No 8, p 36; TsAMO SSSR [Central Archives of the USSR Ministry of Defense], folio 127, inv. 12915, file 89, sheets 39-102, 125, 129-138, 160-166; folio 38, inv. 11360, file 5, sheet 35; file 2, sheet 3.

2. TsAMO, folio 38, inv. 11353, file 5, sheets 83-85.

3. VOYENNO-ISTORICHESKIY ZHURNAL No 3, 1964, p 34.

4. TsAMO, folio 38, inv. 80030, file 4, sheets 14-16.

5. Ibid., folio 131, inv. 454226, file 9, sheet 60.

6. Ibid., folio 15, inv. 977444, file 58, sheet 2.

7. Ibid., folio 38, inv. 11360, file 5, sheet 21.

8. Ibid., file 2, sheets 105, 106.

9. Ibid., sheet 94.

10. Ibid., folio 15, inv. 977444, file 58, sheet 12.
11. Ibid., folio 38, inv. 11353, file 5, sheet 11.
12. Ibid., inv. 11360, file 2, sheet 106.
13. Ibid., file 94.
14. VOYENNO-ISTORICHESKIY ZHURNAL No 8, 1988, pp 36, 38.
15. TsAMO, folio 38, inv. 11353, file 5, sheet 139.

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Without Lull, Respite

00010004e Moscow VOYENNO-ISTORICHESKIY
ZHURNAL in Russian No 11, Nov 88 (signed to press
26 Oct 88) pp 40-46

[Article, published under the heading "Party Political Work," by Maj V.A. Tsarkov, graduate student: "Without a Lull or Respite (From the Experience of Political Work by the Central Partisan Movement Staff)"]

[Text] In the aims of unifying the leadership of the partisan movement and its further development, the State Defense Committee (GKO) on 30 May 1942 adopted a decision to establish under Headquarters Supreme High Command [Hq SHC] the Central Partisan Movement Staff (TsShPD). The member of the VKP(b) [All-Russian Communist Party (Bolshevik)] Central Committee and the First Secretary of the Belorussian CP(b) Central Committee P.K. Ponomarenko was approved as its chief.

During the first months of the activities of the TsShPD, there was no special body which would be directly concerned with the questions of organizing the political work in the enemy rear and its leadership. But the need for this was dictated by the entire course of events. Considering this, on 28 September 1942, the GKO adopted a decision to establish a political directorate in the TsShPD. The latter was to consist of three sections: party and soviet bodies; press, agitation and propaganda; historical. The tasks of the political directorate were set out in the Order of the Commander-in-Chief of the Partisan Movement of 30 September 1942: "The political directorate of the TsShPD is in charge of the leadership and development of agitation and propaganda among the local population in the enemy rear as well as the instituting and leadership of the underground party organizations."¹ Moreover, the newly established body was to provide aid to the republic and oblast party bodies in training and dropping party organizers and liaison officers in the enemy rear, establishing contact with the underground party obkoms, gorkoms and raykoms or their representatives, to aid the Komsomol bodies in sending its workers into the occupied Soviet areas and organize underground Komsomol and other

anti-Nazi organizations there, to direct the activities of the commissars of the partisan detachments and brigades, to organize the underground printing plants and the publishing of newspapers, leaflets and other printed materials in the enemy rear, to supply the partisans and indigenous population with newspapers, leaflets and other literature published centrally and so forth.²

However, the rapidly changing wartime conditions and the acquired experience dictated new solutions. By the GKO Decree of 26 November 1942, organization and establishment changes were carried out in the TsShPD structure. In particular, the political directorate of the staff was turned into a political section. According to the TOE this was to have nine persons who would be concerned with the questions of the activities of the underground organizations, the press as well as agitation and propaganda.³ The Secretary of the Belorussian CP(b) Central Committee V.N. Malin headed the political directorate and then the TsShPD Political Section.

Party organizational work was one of the areas of political work for the TsShPD. Together with the underground party obkoms and raykoms, the commissars and party organizations of the partisan formations, the TsShPD Political Section worked out basic measures to increase combat activeness and the ideological and political level of the partisans and local population. This was reflected in the numerous directives and orders of the TsShPD and in the instructions for persons prior to leaving for the enemy rear for the partisan detachments and underground organizations. The political section began keeping records for the party organizations and communists of many formations with which the TsShPD maintained direct contact. By the summer of 1943, on the territory of Belorussia, for example, contact was established with more than 300 partisan party organizations and in Orel Oblast and the area of the Bryansk Forests, with 54 of them.⁴

In carrying out the work to establish party organizations in the partisan detachments, the TsShPD Political Section closely studied the experience of party construction, the methods and forms of work by the party bodies under illegal conditions, it generalized everything positive and recommended the most valuable for use in the practical activities in the enemy rear. The structure of such party organizations was not standard. It depended upon the organization and establishment of the detachments, their territorial location and the nature of the tasks performed by them. With the formation of centralized leadership, the following typical structure came into being for the party organizations of the partisan formations.

The party organization of a partisan detachment worked with the rights of a primary organization. Inferior (shop) party organizations and groups were set up in the battalions and companies. The party organizations of the detachments were brought together into regimental or brigade organizations and these were headed by party

bureaus or party committees elected at party conferences. There were also party bureaus in the individual detachments which were not part of formations but were directly subordinate to the partisan movement staffs. When the combat situation did not make it possible to convene a party conference, the membership of the bureau (party committee) was determined by the formation's commissar. The party bureau secretaries, as a rule, were deputy commissars of the formations for political affairs. The underground party bodies directed the work of the formation of party organizations.

As the partisan movement grew and the partisan formations became larger, the structure of the party organizations in the formations, after agreement by the TsShPD Political Section, was periodically changed. For example, in the 3d Leningrad Partisan Brigade in 1943, the number of primary party organizations reached 26. Detachments were operating in many rayons of the southern Pskov area and in the western part of Kalinin Oblast. For this reason the party organizations were unable to maintain contact with those underground areas on which they were based. For this reason, upon the recommendation of the Leningrad Party Obkom and the TsShPD Political Section, a political section was established in the brigade and under it a party commission which was given the right to finally resolve questions on admission to the party and the personal cases of the communists. The decisions of the party commission were approved by the chief of the political section and by the brigade's commissar. Party bureaus were maintained in the regiments and detachments and party groups in the companies. A similar structure of party organizations was formed in a number of other formations.

The number of large partisan formations increased significantly in the second period of the Great Patriotic War. Many of them began employing new tactics in defeating the Nazi occupiers in the course of extended raids. The party organizations of the raiding formations did not have constant contact with the local party bodies but were directed by the general instructions of the VKP(b) Central Committee, the republic communist party central committees as well as the TsShPD Political Section. The organization of the party bodies, the forms and methods of their work in such formations differed in their particular features and these were determined by the extraterritorial nature of their combat activities.

In the large raiding party formations, upon the recommendation of the TsShPD Political Section they usually established party bureaus of five- seven men. The members of the bureau were not elected at the general meeting but rather were appointed by the formation commissar and approved by the republic CP(b) Central Committee. In the partisan regiments and detachments, party organizations were formed headed by party organizers who were appointed by the regiment and detachment commissars and approved by the formation party bureaus.

An important place in the activities of the TsShPD was held by organizational work in admitting the best partisans as candidate members and members of the party. In letters sent to the Belorussian underground committees and to the commissars of the partisan detachments in the Bryansk Forests and other formations, the TsShPD Political Section issued specific instructions on activating these activities, intensifying individual work with the party candidate members, shortening the probation period and so forth.⁵ The growth of the party organizations in the partisan units and subunits was the direct consequence of this work. Thus, while by the summer of 1942, not all the partisan detachments as yet had party organizations, by the year's end, their absence was already a rare exception. From September through December, for example, more than 100 primary party organizations were formed in the partisan formations of Smolensk Oblast.⁶ According to far from complete data, in the summer and autumn of 1942, around 200 underground party, Komsomol and anti-Nazi organizations arose on Ukrainian occupied territory.⁷ By the end of 1942, 472 party organizations were operating in Belorussia bringing together over 8,000 party members.⁸

The convening of party conferences in the enemy rear shows the increased level of party organizational work by the local party bodies and the TsShPD Party Section. This was not only of enormous political importance, it strengthened the confidence of people in victory, but also made it possible to discuss urgent questions of the partisan movement and the ways to resolve them, to exchange experience and to set plans for coordinated and effective strikes against the enemy.

Having studied the experience of holding the first partisan party conferences which were conducted in the summer of 1942 in the 2d Leningrad Partisan Brigade and in the partisan detachments of the southwestern and southern areas of the Bryansk Forests, the TsShPD Political Section recommended that all the partisan movement staffs convene them in the future. In December 1942, a party conference was held in the partisan brigade under the command of F.S. Danchenkov (Orel Oblast). The communists discussed the results of the work done by the brigade's party organization and adopted a decision which obliged each VKP(b) member and candidate member to head the struggle for the quickest expulsion of the Nazi occupiers from Soviet land. Party conferences were also convened in other formations.

The TsShPD Political Section devoted a great deal of attention to working with the commissars of the partisan formations. Upon instructions of the VKP(b) Central Committee, the TsShPD organized the training of commanders and commissars of the partisan detachments, scouts and mine specialists in specially established schools. By March 1943, these had been completed by 70 commissars of the partisan formations.⁹ Instructions and recommendations on work in the enemy rear were received by them in letters from the TsShPD specially

sent out to them. Moreover, each political worker, before being sent behind the front line, was given detailed instructions in the TsShPD Political Section.

The organizing of mass agitation work among the partisans and population in the enemy rear was also an important area in the political work of the TsShPD. The main aim of these activities was to promptly inform the partisans and the population on the course of struggle against the Nazi invaders, to assist in developing a mass partisan movement, to unmask the falseness of Nazi propaganda and to focus the masses of people on thwarting the military, economic and political plans of the Nazi Command.

Printed propaganda became one of the most effective forms of agitation and propaganda work. The organizing of the central and zonal staffs of the partisan movement and the TsShPD Political Section and their close tie to the local underground party organizations made it possible to improve significantly the coordinating of publishing activities and organize the delivery of propaganda literature to the enemy rear.

Just how widespread the agitation and propaganda activities of the TsShPD had become can be seen from the following fact: just from December 1942 through March 1943, the TsShPD sent over 6 million leaflets, newspapers and pamphlets into the enemy rear,¹⁰ including PRAVDA, ISVESTIYA, KOMSOMOLSKAYA PRAVDA, KRASNAYA ZVEZDA, MOSKOVSKIY BOLSHEVIK, LENINGRADSKAYA PRAVDA, ZA SOVETSKUYU UKRAINU, PROPAGANDIST, BLOKNOT AGITATORA KRASNOY ARMII and others. Leaflets were sent into the operational areas of the partisan detachments, such as "Ukase of the Presidium of the USSR Supreme Soviet on Striking the Medal 'To the Partisan of the Great Patriotic War' First and Second Degrees," "Appeal to the Partisans on the Offensive of the Red Army," "New Strikes Against the Enemy," "The Hour of Liberation is Approaching," "The Results of the Offensive of Our Troops at Stalingrad" and others (publishing run of 150,000-300,000 copies).¹¹

According to incomplete data, in 1942, the TsShPD Political Section dispatched more than 52 million leaflets, pamphlets and other printed product into the enemy rear.¹² Also sent there were sets of libraries made up of sociopolitical, military and artistic literature. Let me give a list of just certain books: "Ob izuchenii Kratkogo kursa istorii VKP(b) v usloviyakh Velikoy Otechestvennoy voyny" [On Studying the Concise Course of VKP(b) History Under the Conditions of the Great Patriotic War], "Komsomol v voyakh za Rodinu" [Komsomol in the Battles for the Motherland], "Sputnik partizana" [The Partisan's Accomplice], "Nastupatelnyy boy v lesu" [Offensive Combat in a Forest], "Minomety v boyu" [Mortars in Combat], "Rukovodstvo po nazemnoy razvedke" [Manual on Ground Reconnaissance], the play of A. Korneychuk "The Front" and others.¹³

The central and republic press which was delivered behind the front line was a powerful ideological weapon in the fight against the occupiers. The report note of the political section chief V.N. Malin to the Propaganda and Agitation Directorate of the VKP(b) Central Committee of 14 December 1942 emphasized: "...interest in our newspapers, in our printed bolshevik word on the part of the partisans and the population in the occupied areas is exceptionally great.... Both the partisans and the local residents in meeting each worker sent into the enemy rear asks first of all whether they have brought newspapers and leaflets."¹⁴

The TsShPD Political Section not only disseminated but together with the party obkoms participated in publishing special issues of the oblast newspapers. Joint publications were undertaken, for example, in Kalinin Oblast (the newspaper PROLETARSKAYA PRAVDA).¹⁵

All the printed publications sent into the enemy rear informed the Soviet citizens who had ended up on Nazi occupied territory about the domestic and international position of the Soviet Union, on the situation on the Soviet-German Front, they unmasked Naziism and primarily the provocative fabrications by Goebbels on the defeat of the Soviet Armed Forces, and they explained what had to be done in order to help the Soviet Army defeat the hated enemy. Here local conditions were taken into account. For example, in the western oblasts in the Ukraine, Belorussia and in the Baltic republics, where the partisans had to fight against not only the Nazis but also the bourgeois nationalists, the special printed publications, along with explaining the nature and course of the war, gave great attention to the attempts by the Nazis to set one nation against another, national interests against international interests and the working class against the peasantry and intelligentsia.

Regardless of the enormous run and the broad subject matter of the printed materials prepared by the forces of the Soviet rear, they could not fully satisfy the needs of the public and the partisans. Moreover, the central press was unable to respond effectively to events in the enemy rear and specifically answer the questions which arose among the inhabitants of one or another area. Only a local underground and partisan press could carry out these tasks.

The VKP(b) Central Committee, the Union republic communist party central committees, the party obkoms, the Main Political Directorate of the Soviet Army and the republic partisan movement staffs took all necessary measures to supply the underground party bodies and partisan formations with equipment, materials and paper for publishing small-run local newspapers and pamphlets. ¹⁷ The TsShPD Political Section, for example, from 1 December 1942 through 17 March 1943, sent the partisan detachments and formations some 75 portable and 7 so-called "pocket" printing plants, including 20 to Belorussia, 11 for the Ukraine, 10 for Smolensk Oblast, 5 for Orel, 5 for Leningrad, 3 for Voronezh, 10

for Krasnodar Kray, 1 for the Crimea while the TsShPD representative on the Southwestern Front for dispatch to the southern regions of the Ukraine was given 10 portable and 7 "pocket" printing plants. Moreover, 13 tons of paper and 120 plates were sent into the enemy rear for the partisan newspapers.¹⁶

Along with the printing equipment skilled printers were sent to the large partisan formations. The agency of the Ukrainian Partisan Movement Staff under the Military Council of the Third Ukrainian Front twice organized courses for editor-printers where the partisans would learn printing. From the spring of 1943 until the end of partisan operations, the TsShPD Special School trained 67 editors, 115 printers and 118 typesetters.¹⁷ As a result, the publishing of underground newspapers expanded. They began to be received regularly by the readers. Their publishing runs increased significantly. Over the war years at various times around 400 underground newspapers were appearing on the occupied territory of the USSR. In the partisan detachments of the Ukraine, Belorussia, Leningrad, Orel and Smolensk Oblasts they began to regularly publish, four or five times a month, leaflets in a run of 500-2,000 copies each.¹⁸

The partisan press described the glorious combat feats of the partisans and underground members and in vivid, stirring examples of their feats taught the population to love the motherland and hate the enemies and with weapons in hand to defend its freedom and independence. The newspapers and leaflets printed much local material which gave the names of the enemies including the gauleiters, the commandants, bergomeisters and Gestapo police, they provided information on their criminal activities and disclosed traitors. They gave numerous facts and documents unmasking the aggressive plans of the Nazis, their monstrous crimes on Soviet land, and published letters by local inhabitants who had been taken away into Nazi hard labor. The public was also warned about provocations being prepared by the occupiers and specific ways for combating the Nazi invaders were indicated.

Oral agitation and propaganda were an equally important form of agitation and propaganda work. The TsShPD Political Section gave great attention to its organization. This was planned in close contact with the oblast and republic party bodies. In those population points where Nazi garrisons were not stationed, the TsShPD Political Section advised that meetings and assemblies be held. Speaking to the public at them were the commanders and commissars of the partisan formations and detachments and the secretaries of the underground party committees and primary party organizations. Thus, on the eve of the 26th anniversary of the Great October Socialist Revolution, the Crimean Partisan Detachment under the command of F.I. Fedorenko captured a motor vehicle column from the Nazis. Having decorated the captured vehicles with red flags, the partisans drove through the villages located on the route to

Simferopol. They were present in 14 population points and held meetings there. The detachment leaders and the subunit commanders gave reports on the situation on the Soviet-German Front and in the Crimea as well as events in unoccupied territory.¹⁹

In areas where the partisan movement had assumed a broad scope, the TsShPD recommended that special agitation detachments be organized and these were not only to conduct conversations, meetings and assemblies but also organize amateur concerts for the local population. For example, the agitation detachment formed by the Vileya Underground Party Obkom and consisting of 25 partisans in the villages and hamlets of the oblast gave 97 speeches which brought together over 15,000 persons. The concerts of the agitation detachment were very popular. If the combat situation did not allow the organizing of collective measures, it was proposed that the command of the partisan formations conduct talks with small groups of the public or individual colloquiums. No accurate count was kept of such talks. However, a notion of the scope of oral agitation can be gathered from information on the individual oblasts and partisan detachments. For example, just in August-September 1943, the members of the agitation collectives from the partisan formations of Mogilev Oblast gave 750 reports and conducted around 5,000 talks. In January-February 1944, in Vileya Oblast agitators gave 3,576 reports and these were attended by over 120,000 persons.²⁰

For strengthening leadership over political work and for providing help to the command of the partisan formations, the TsShPD regularly sent its own representatives into the enemy rear. Thus, at the beginning of December 1942, for initiating party political work in the enemy rear, the deputy chief of the TsShPD Political Section, D.O. Dzaragazov, was sent to the Northern Caucasus. At the end of 1942, a co-worker from the Political Section, I.F. Konkin, traveled to the Kursk and Orel VKP(b) Obkoms. In February 1943, the co-worker from the Political Section, M.A. Kryukov, was sent to the political section of the formation of partisan detachments in the Bryansk Forests.

In the partisan areas and zones, the TsShPD workers regularly held meetings for the secretaries of the underground raykoms and the commissars of the partisan formations. At these they discussed the regular tasks of the party and Komsomol organizations, they analyzed their activities and planned measures to strengthen political work. All of this was an essential condition for successfully developing the partisan movement on the temporarily occupied Soviet territory.

The political work of the TsShPD was an indispensable part of all the party's ideological and political work. This was organized on the basis of the decisions of the VKP(b)

Central Committee and the Soviet government, the orders of the Supreme Commander-in-Chief as well as the decisions and directives of the central, republic and oblast party bodies.

The TsShPD existed for a little more than 18 months, but during this time it carried out enormous party organizational work and due to this the partisan movement acquired unprecedented scope and organization. The TsShPD Political Section organized active agitation and propaganda work which played an important role in indoctrinating Soviet patriotism in the partisans and indigenous population. The main result of the political activities in the enemy rear was the broad involvement of the masses of people in the fight against the Nazi invaders and the turning of the partisan movement into an important strategic factor in the armed struggle during the Great Patriotic War.

Footnotes

1. TsPA IML [Central Party Archives of the Marxism-Leninism Institute], folio 69, inv. 1, file 1061, sheet 3.
2. Ibid.
3. Ibid., sheet 3, 4.
4. "Partiya vo glave narodnoy borby v tylu vraga 1941-1945 gg." [The Party at the Head of the People's Struggle in the Enemy Rear in 1941- 1944], Moscow, Mysl, 1976, p 223.
5. TsPA IML, folio 69, inv. 1, file 1061, sheet 16.
6. Ibid., file 65, sheet 19.
7. "Ukrainskaya SSR v Velikoy Otechestvennoy voyne Sovetskogo Soyuza 1941-1945 gg." [The Ukrainian SSR in the Great Patriotic War of the Soviet Union 1941-1945], Kiev, Politizdat Ukrainy, Vol 1, 1975, p 477.
8. TsPA IML, folio 69, inv. 1, file 784, sheet 39.
9. Ibid., file 793, sheet 82.
10. "Istoriya KPSS" [History of the CPSU], Moscow, Politizdat, Vol 5, Book 1, 1970, p 486.
11. TsPA IML, folio 69, inv. 1, file 1061, sheet 20.
12. "Partiya vo glave...", p 223.
13. TsPA IML, folio 69, inv. 1, file 1061, sheet 21.
14. Ibid., sheets 2, 3.
15. Ibid., sheet 24.
16. Ibid., sheet 25.

17. Ibid., inv. 1, file 793, sheet 83.

18. Ibid., file 1061, sheet 26.

19. "Plamya nad Krymom" [Flames Over the Crimea], Simferopol, Crimea, 1969, p 190.

20. PAIP pri TsK KP Belorussii [Party Archives of the Party History Institute Under the Belorussian CP Central Committee], folio 63, inv. 16, file 2, sheets 29, 30.

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Prague and the Military Conspiracy Case

00010004f Moscow VOYENNO-ISTORICHESKIY
ZHURNAL in Russian No 11, Nov 88 (signed to press
26 Oct 88) pp 47-56

[Article, published under the heading "Viewpoints, Judgments and Versions," by I. Pfaff: "Prague and the Military Conspiracy Case"; for the first installment see Issue No 10 of this magazine for 1988]

[Text] Prior to 1937, Benes never received Aleksandrovskiy. And that the content of the February telegram from Mastny did not reach the hands of the Soviet ambassador by some other means was confirmed by Aleksandrovskiy's message to Litvinov of 8 March on his talk with the Minister of Foreign Affairs Krofta. Krofta 4 weeks after the sensational announcement by Count Trautmansdorf had not made the slightest hint to Aleksandrovskiy about what he himself and Benes on 11 and 13 February had learned from Mastny.¹ The references frequently encountered in the literature that Benes immediately informed Stalin relate to the events of the last April and first May days, that is, to an almost 3-month later period.² The completely obvious slowness of Benes on transmitting the obtained information to Moscow and Paris was dictated by the circumspection of the politician who wanted to retest this extremely important message and back it up with additional data and in accord with his character was unprepared to act impulsively and this, obviously, had not been unnoticed by the SD. To a lesser degree, Mastny in his telegram of 20 March to Krofta insisted, after a silence of almost 6 weeks, on the clear response from Prague and he expressed regret that he himself did not possess "more detailed information" on the given matter.³ If Mastny had concluded that the contacts of Hitler's confidants were aimed at neutralizing the Czechoslovak-Soviet Treaty of Mutual Aid, he would not have been in error. However, he did not understand the main goal of the German maneuver, that is, to force Benes to turn over to Stalin information on Hitler's hopes for a coup in the USSR.

That "more detailed information" which Mastny lacked was clearly turned over to him by Goring on 7 April, the explanations of whom, although we have no materials on the content of the conversation between Mastny and Goring, were obviously more expressive and evidently

more concrete than those which Mastny had heard 2 months previously from Trautmansdorf. And this was probably because of the following reason: in Berlin it had been established that in February Benes had not informed Stalin and that it was unconditionally essential, in the first place, to bring in stronger "arguments" with concrete "data" and, secondly, employ for transmitting them a more authoritative individual than Trautmansdorf, for example, some member of the Nazi upper clique. After the conversation held between Mastny and Goring, the avalanche actually began to move: early in the morning of 12 April, Mastny requested a meeting with Benes and this was set for 17 April in Prague.⁴ Immediately after the conversation with Mastny, Benes decided to call in Aleksandrovskiy on 22 April.⁵ On the eve, on 21 April, two highly placed officials from the Ministry of Internal Affairs (one of them was the chief of the Political Police, the Ministerial Director Karel Novak), at the request of the nation's president, the minister of foreign affairs and the minister of internal affairs, traveled to Berlin, where they spent 2 days and also spoke with the Gestapo Chief Muller.⁶ Their trip was clearly designed for testing out and supplementing the information which had been turned over to the intelligence service of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs by Wittig after the talk between Mastny and Goring. Immediately after the return of both emissaries, Benes and Krofta in a short interval of time received Aleksandrovskiy three times: 24 and 26 April and 7 May.⁷ Thus, over a period of 16 days, the Soviet ambassador four times was received by the nation's president and by the minister of foreign affairs. In the contact between Benes and Aleksandrovskiy over the period of 1934-1938, this was an extraordinary and single instance.

As a result, 4 days later after the last conversation between Aleksandrovskiy and Benes, Tukhachevskiy was removed from the position of deputy people's commissar of defense and chief of the General Staff. The direct linkage and connection between the visit of Benes by Aleksandrovskiy and the removal of Tukhachevskiy are more than apparent. The causal link was all the more strengthened by events which occurred in Moscow on 3 and 4 May (that is, during the period between the next to last and last visits by Aleksandrovskiy to Benes). On 3 May, the Kremlin had sent to the English Embassy in Moscow an overseas passport for Tukhachevskiy with a request to issue a visa (the marshal was to head a Soviet delegation to the coronation festivities in London). Less than 24 hours later, the request to issue the visa was withdrawn with an explanation that Tukhachevskiy had "suddenly taken ill."⁸ That on 4 May, the Kremlin prevented the departure of Tukhachevskiy from the nation and had him under suspicion, although he had not yet been openly charged, is a consequence of the conversation between Aleksandrovskiy and Benes on 26 April. The removal of Tukhachevskiy from the positions he held on 11 May and his subsequent arrest were obviously the consequence of the last meeting on 7 May

and which was also attended by Mastny, and was primarily a direct result of the personal message from Benes to Stalin on 8 May⁹ and which finally and irrefutably determined the fate of the marshal as a consequence of the raising of the most serious accusations against him. These accusations, on the one hand, proceeded from Goring and Wittig and, on the other, appeared as a result of the additional investigations in Berlin and carried out by the representatives of the Czechoslovak Political Police during the period from 21 through 23 April (Heydrich evidently, had issued instructions for false documents to be turned over to them). The supposition that the information on the crucial role of Benes in this is one of those legends which subsequently began to circulate around the Tukhachevskiy affairs has turned out to be absolutely erroneous.¹⁰ Nevertheless, completely inadmissible is the clumsy attempt undertaken out of the ignorance of the essence of the matter to constantly depict Benes as intentionally acting in the given affair as the henchmen and lackey of Hitler. Certainly it is well known that beginning in 1933, he was the most consistent opponent of the Fuhrer in European politics.¹¹

From the categorical and brief phrases in the notes found in the president's office, it seems, it was even apparent that the first two talks with Aleksandrovskiy, on 22 and 24 April, were accompanied by excited debates between the Soviet ambassador who was endeavoring to repudiate the accusations against Tukhachevskiy as absurd, and Benes, who did not succeed in shaking this confidence of the ambassador and that Aleksandrovskiy only on 26 April and 7 May capitulated to the "revelatory material" shown to him by Benes.¹² That in the Soviet Union the first two messages from Benes were received with mistrust and doubts is indirectly indicated by the assurances of Soviet diplomats in Prague and Moscow of 21 and 27 April according to which no talks had been conducted ever between Moscow and Berlin.¹³ We can only suppose what Benes specifically told or handed over to Aleksandrovskiy until in 1979 it was possible to find the Politburo decision taken in Moscow of 24 May. This gives the contents of the personal message from Benes to Stalin of 8 May (which was delivered to Moscow not before the 11th and more probably on 12 May) and also references are made to the "documents" appended to this message, however without any additional clarifications. This also leads one to feel that Stalin did not present the received materials to the Politburo members but merely provided information on their presence. Regardless of the certainly sensational data of this decision, using it it is still impossible to concretize and analyze the material fed by the Nazis to Prague. From the content of the Politburo decision it is impossible to clearly bring out the content of the Benes message, to separate the two sets and provide a description of the nature and origin of the "documents." However, on the basis of the Politburo decision, it is possible at least generally to sketch in the accusations against Tukhachevskiy and the other generals. The "conspirators" supposed planned "in cooperation with the German

General Staff and the Gestapo...as a result of a military coup to overthrow Stalin and the Soviet government as well as all the party bodies and Soviet power, and establish...a military dictatorship." This was to be carried out with the aid of an anticommunist "national government" tied to Germany and aimed at murdering Stalin and his leading associates, "to grant to Germany for its aid special privileges within the Soviet Union" and make "territorial concessions to Germany...in the Ukraine..." without mentioning the abrogation of the alliances with Paris and Prague. All of this was to be carried out under a slogan of establishing a "national Russia" which would be under a strong military power.¹⁴ Although this description of a supposedly existing plan which has such an absurd ring that its plausibility should not cause any doubt in anyone, generally does not provide any information as to by what ways and with what means this coup should specifically be carried out (which from the very outset should seem suspicious), but still from it it is clearly seen that the significantly and strikingly abstract information coincides with the first information from Mastny in February 1937. This coincidence could obviously not remain unnoticed to Benes and the leaders of Czechoslovak foreign policy and this, obviously, intensified the trust in the forgeries in Prague. It is easy to imagine what panic this information should evoke in Prague. This also explains why Prague so carelessly did not subject them to any serious rechecking by the intelligence bodies.

Only too late and only in a limited degree did Czechoslovak diplomacy come to understand the Nazi origin of the rumors concerning the Soviet-German talks and which had spread at the end of April, without having realized, however, all the refinement of accusations against Tikhachevskiy on the eve of the trial of his case.¹⁶ This is seen from the fact that the Czechoslovak mission in Moscow complacently commented on the removal of Tikhachevskiy with a reference to his supposedly existing connection with the Trotskyites and his "Bonapartist complex," as a consequence of which there was supposedly the fear that the marshal would seize power in his own hands.¹⁷ On 20 June 1937, however, one can not a fundamental change in the position of the Czechoslovak mission in Moscow. The mission categorically rejected the official Soviet version according to which eight leading Red Army commanders had supposedly maintained ties with the German Secret Service and describe the entire process as a miscarriage of justice.¹⁸ However, this may be, although this interesting interpretation did not go beyond the limits of a hypothesis in its importance, however with its aid there was a significantly critical reception of the attempt at a logical and rational interpretation where the official version had a false, mistaken, illogical and fantastic ring. If this interpretation in its analysis of the situation had contained a real grain, then the removal of Tikhachevskiy for Czechoslovakia would have been doubly tragic, particularly if the marshal, in contrast to Stalin, in actuality was conducting a policy of preparing for war against Germany and hence was the opposite of what he was

accused. In addition to this, confirmation of the validity of this information would have finally explained why the Benes regime was so strongly interested in the elimination of Tikhachevskiy. In any event, the conclusions of the Czechoslovak diplomats in Moscow were significantly more accurate and realistic than the blind opinion of Prague, where they insisted on the conviction that Tikhachevskiy was guilty.

Thus, Krofta 2 days after the execution of the generals, in a talk with the Romanian ambassador expressed his satisfaction with the trial and stated that he, like Benes, 4 months before this had learned from Berlin that Hitler was fully determined after the successful military putsch and after the stabilizing of the military dictatorship, to establish friendly relations with Moscow and that Prague could only welcome the firm, decisive measures by Stalin.¹⁹ A week later after this, Krofta also informed the English ambassador that he possessed reliable evidence of Tikhachevskiy's guilt.²⁰ When Benes confirmed that he had received from Berlin irrefutable, persuasive and completely "reliable" evidence on the Tikhachevskiy conspiracy when he again approximately in mid-September 1937 assured the American ambassador that he knew that Tikhachevskiy had been maintaining conspiratorial ties with Berlin and that Berlin in the early summer of 1937 had been preparing a treaty with Russia in the event of a successful military coup in Moscow,²¹ and when even after the annexation of Austria he considered it essential to purge the Red Army after the Tikhachevskiy affair and made the absurd assertion that the Soviet Union after all the purges had become stronger than before,²² and although the Czechoslovak attache in Moscow, Lt Col Dastih, from June through October had endeavored in a number of detailed telegrams with accurate evidence and concrete counterarguments to persuade Benes in the fallaciousness of Stalin's accusations,²³ here Benes as before was merely continuing to show his doctrinaire stubbornness and vain conviction of his own infallibility, since precisely he had informed Moscow and precisely he had acquired the information on the conspiracy of the generals. Could he think otherwise, even if he did know that even among the Soviet leadership there were great doubts as to the guilt of Tikhachevskiy as is impressively seen from Litvinov's indignation on this trial.²⁴

In addition, Benes was not aware both subsequently of the fatal consequences for Czechoslovakia of the trial over the Tikhachevskiy case as well as of the fierce purges which developed in the army as a result of this a significance which was immediately grasped by the American ambassador in Moscow who stated that the removal of Tikhachevskiy meant the loss of the most capable head which the Red Army had ever had as well as the extension of the purges into that sole force which up to then had not been touched by Stalinist terror, that is, the army.²⁵ Prague sooner believed the absurd assertions which were addressed by the just appointed Litvinov deputy, Potemkin, to Prague and Paris that "recent events have strengthened the former orientation of

Soviet foreign policy" and that Moscow by the liquidation of the "traitors" had shown loyalty to its allied obligations.²⁶ Probably Benes's position on this question was further strengthened in the spring of 1938 as a consequence of the tendentious, pro-Soviet messages from his new ambassador to Moscow, Fierlinger, who completely followed the Moscow line.²⁷

It remains to explain why the German intrigue reached Moscow precisely via Prague. Its path via Benes guaranteed Berlin that Moscow would either satisfy its ally with an explanation over this affairs or would take measures against Tukhachevskiy and that Prague would also inform Paris of this. The "initiating" of Prague by a clever maneuver which was the point of all the talks of Hitler's confidants with Benes at the end of 1936, with these emissaries actually not knowing the true purpose of their mission, guaranteed Berlin that not only would Moscow become aware of the accusations against Tukhachevskiy in the case but also a forced public response by Moscow to the received information. Of course, the Nazi slanderous accusations against Tukhachevskiy had been disseminated, according to the Berlin sources, as early as the autumn of 1935, but then nothing happened. At that time, the Moscow trials had not yet commenced while precisely the trials (in August 1936 and January 1937) gave hope that Stalin would believe the intrigues against Tukhachevskiy and the Soviet General Staff or (as was to actually happen) would accept this intrigue even as a favorable opportunity. From the psychological standpoint the Nazi intrigue was very delicately aimed so that the objective desire of Benes to strengthen the Soviet Army or, respectively, not to permit its weakening would objectively lead precisely to a decline in its combat might due to the mass purges which, in the atmosphere of the Stalinist mass terror in the Soviet Union should inevitably follow. The German historians, incidentally, after the fact have uniformly proven that the conspiracy of the Nazi circles headed by Heydrich was aimed primarily at this goal.²⁸

Only after his message to Stalin of 8 May did Benes also inform the French Prime Minister Blum of the supposedly existing conspiracy in the Soviet High Command and asked him in a confidential message of 10 May in carrying out the French "ties with the Soviet General Staff to observe maximum caution since the members of the leadership of the Soviet General Staff are maintain suspicious contacts with Germany."²⁹ For this reason as well, the efforts of the Soviet Union in Paris (May-June 1937) to strengthen the nature and methods of providing French aid to Czechoslovakia as a preliminary condition for coordinating it with Soviet aid did not receive any affirmative response. This indecisiveness was felt in the Soviet Union and there was an effort to neutralize the unfavorable condition, of course, again only verbally. At the end of April, Ambassador Pavlu forwarded a statement by one Soviet diplomat who is not indicated by name: "If the USSR could not provide effective help to Republican Spain due to the significant distance, the situation is quite different in the case of Czechoslovakia, where such obstacles would not arise at all."³⁰ Obviously, the Czechoslovak diplomat did not realize that

Romania's resistance to the passage of Soviet troops into Czechoslovakia and Moscow's plan to make the moves by sea and air transport only into France represented no less an obstacle for the providing of Soviet aid than the above-mentioned spatial distance.

From an American source we know that in April 1938, even Benes, it seems, had abandoned his hopes that it would be possible to rely on the Soviet Union as a strong ally. Benes "no longer viewed the Soviet Army as an effective force in the actions of the West in Europe."³¹ Of course, it is impossible to affirm in any way whether Benes had actually overlooked the fact that Moscow by the moment of the Austrian anschluss was completely absorbed with the trial against Bukharin and Rykov. In any event, it can be firmly stated that Benes shared the universal opinion that the Soviet Union had abandoned European politics and had gone into isolation; the speeches by Litvinov represented scarcely anything more than cover-ups for Soviet policy of those times and for concentrating forces in the name of eradicating millions of politically "inconvenient" people.

At the end of 1937 and the beginning of 1938, the German ambassador in Prague characterized the relations of Czechoslovakia with the USSR after the Moscow trials as a whole and after the Tukhachevskiy case in particular as in no way more intense but actually somewhat dulled. Having noted, rather correctly, the mood in Prague, he, however, drew the erroneous conclusion that Czechoslovakia was not relying at all on Soviet aid.³² Under no circumstances could the Czechoslovak leadership abandon Soviet aid, as Benes persuasively confirmed to the English ambassador in May 1938. He warned of the possibility of catastrophic consequences in the event of excluding the Soviet Union from general European affairs.³³ That even the essential Czechoslovak hesitations vis-a-vis Soviet domestic and foreign policy could not bring about in Prague a revision of the alliance with Moscow became apparent in Benes retrospectively after 22 June 1941: "For 3 years I was forced to maneuver in order to also involve the Russians in these affairs. Here I criticized the Bolsheviks since they had committed terrible things, swinishness.... Benes criticized the Bolsheviks and all their infamous deeds, for in any...he saw the Soviet Union withdrawing their vitally important participation for us in this war."³⁴

Appendix 1: Deputy Chief of the Czechoslovak General Staff, Div Gen Bogumil Fiala to the Chief of the Military Intelligence Service, Col Frantisek Moravec

Prague, 9 November 1937 Top Secret

9 November 1937

Brother colonel!

In following up on our conversation yesterday, I am forwarding to you for free official use a review of the impressions which our military delegation brought back at the end of last month from a trip to the USSR.

While initially our Supreme Command refused to accept the liquidation of Tukhachevskiy and the superior Soviet Command as a major loss for the Red Army and after the start of the purge was convinced that "the Russian Army will survive the gloomy stage, however it still has great strength," our delegation sent to verify the condition of training in the Red Army has returned with alarming results exceeding the gloomiest expectations.

The flow of mass repressions—as far as we could determine at least 2,000 officers had been executed—has caused fears over the internal disintegration of the army, a weakening of its operational strike force as well as its readiness to act, on its inability to conduct offensive actions and further over the lack of tactical and strategic experience for the new young commanders who in thousands in the rank of lieutenants have become regimental commanders and majors are now divisional commanders. We noted a terrible weakness in the area of troop command, strategy and tactics, and further we noted obsolete equipping and a shortage of equipment and weapons which has long existed in our army.

At a session of the Superior Defense Council of 3 November held with the participation of the republic president, upon recommendations of the president a decision was taken to try to make up for the shortcomings by large deliveries of special weapons from our defense industry for the Soviet Army which to a significant degree has reduced its battleworthiness. If this were not so tragic, it would be seen as grotesque that we, a small state which is threatened, should weaken our own military potential in order to outfit and modernize the army of our greatest ally! Unfortunately, we can do nothing in the most important area, in the inability and lack of experience of the new command corps; we are unable to send hundreds if not thousands of officers to the Russians, disregarding the question of how they might be received there.

Characteristically, precisely over the question of the purge and its consequences, the president stated with regret that the USSR had recently focused its interests predominantly on domestic affairs while the foreign policy problems which it should have been concerned with had been left in the background.

Please give some thought to my confidential information during the forthcoming second conference with representatives of the Soviet intelligence service.

Fiala
Archives of Gen Fiala
private Holding in Prague
(translation from the Czech by the author)

Appendix 2: The German Ambassador Franz von Papen to Adolf Hitler Extraordinary Ambassador and Minister Plenipotentiary Vienna, 23 December 1937 Under Special Assignment Top Secret

Contents: Politburo Directive

In the appendix I am forwarding a new directive which I have received through my channels and issued by the

Politburo of the Soviet Union to its foreign policy missions of 10 December 1937.

The most interesting it seems to me are not the proposals on the content of the talks between Lord Halifax and the Fuhrer and the rumors on Germany's preparation of acts of violence against Czechoslovakia, but rather the bitter disappointment traceable from this directive in the development of Franco-Soviet relations. The obvious refusal of Delbos of the Soviet offer to visit Moscow, seemingly, greatly disappointed the Soviets. The fact that Delbos visited virtually all the capitals of the Eastern European countries but not Moscow should cause a feeling of insult and isolation in Soviet policy.

At the same time, it should be imperatively pointed out that the trips recommended in the Politburo directive of 24 May of Litvinov to Prague and Krofta to Moscow did not come about and 7 months later the military convention then planned by the Soviet side between the USSR and Czechoslovakia was not concluded (talks had not even been conducted on this question). This can be viewed as an indication of Prague's alienation from Moscow related basically to the negative perception of the purge being conducted in the USSR and also viewed as a principled revision of the attitude toward the Soviet Union on the Czech side.

To the Fuhrer and Reichschancellor
Berlin
Papen
PA AA in Bonn: V Political Directorate Pol. 5
"Domestic Policy, Legislative and Party Activities in Russia"
Volume 4, Conclusion

Footnotes

1. "Message From Aleksandrovskiy to Litvinov From Prague of 8 March 1937, in the collection "Munich in Documents," Prague, Vol II, 1958, p 94 et seq.
2. "World War II," Bern, Vol 6, 1954, p 295; Edward Carr, "Berlin—Moscow," Stuttgart, 1954, p 155; Heinrich Teske, "General Ernst Kostrig," Frankfurt, 1966, p 95.
3. Telegram from Mastny to Krofta from Berlin of 20 March.—Berlin, 1937, No 19, Archives of Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Prague.
4. A/543/37.—Archives of Chancellory of Republic President in Prague.
5. A/578/37.—Ibid.
6. Note of the ambassador, Dr Jin, chief of the chancellory of the ministry of foreign affairs.—Ca. 1937.—No 2150, Archives of the Chancellory of the Republic President in Prague.
7. A/596/37, A/604/37, A/695/37.—Ibid.

8. Message of Schulenburg to minister of foreign affairs from Moscow of 5 May 1937.—IV Political Directorate, Pol.—Vol 3, Russia. Vol 2—Bonn, 1937.

9. Decision of the Politburo of the VKP(b) [All-Union Communist Party (Bolshevik)] Central Committee, Moscow, 24 May 1937; V Political Directorate, Pol., Vol 5, "Domestic Policy, Parliamentary and Party Activities in Russia," Vol 3, Bonn, 1937. This has already been given comparatively briefly. See: Henri Nogueres, "Munich or False Peace," London, 1965, p 36.

10. Theodor Pierker, "The Moscow Show Trials of 1936-1938," Munich, 1963, p 75.

11. "Benes had already tried to be useful to Nazi Germany before (this is precisely how it was put!—Author) when he forwarded to Stalin the documents put in his hands by the Nazi government (put precisely this way!—Author) on the supposedly existing Tukhachevskiy conspiracy.... That Benes who certainly knew the origin of the documents consciously wanted to provide services to Hitler (put precisely that way!—Author) and Stalin is apparent from the entire orientation of Benes.... The episode of the betrayal of Tukhachevskiy shows, judging from this, that on the eve of World War II the possibility of collaboration between Hitler, Stalin and Benes (put precisely this way!—Author) was not improbable.... That Benes considered collaboration with Hitler possible (put exactly that way!—Author) coincides fully with his foreign policy conception." C.J. Newmen, "Destruction or Self-Destruction of Democracy. Europe in the Period of 1918-1938," Stuttgart, 1984, p 180 et seq.

12. The instantaneous measures taken in Moscow against Tukhachevskiy after the intervention of Benes excludes the assertion by the French diplomat Coulondre that Benes informed Paris before Moscow and that Daladier, the foreign minister, forwarded to Potemkin a warning supposedly received prior to this in Paris from Benes, as early as February 1937. His other information corresponds little to the truth to the same degree. For example, the confidential message to Daladier (also in February 1937) supposedly received from a reliable source (obviously not from Benes) on contacts between the representatives of the Reich and members of high Soviet military figures and the preparations in full swing for a military coup, the overthrow of the Soviet government and the concluding of a treaty with Berlin. The the "conspirators" through the Soviet mission in Prague maintained ostensible contact with the Germans is completely excluded. See: Robert Goulondre, "From Moscow to Berlin, 1936-1939," Bonn, 1937, p 82 et seq.; W. Churchill, op. cit., p 259.

13. Note of Krofta about a conversation with Aleksandrovskiy, Cav. 1937, No 2206, Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Prague; Message from Pavlu to Krofta on the demarche of Potemkin from Moscow of 27 April, Moscow, 1937, No 36, Archives of Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Prague; message of Aleksandrovskiy

to Litvinov from Prague of 22 April, "Documents and Materials on the History of Czechoslovak-Soviet Relations," Prague, Vol III, 1979, No 204, p 357.

14. "Decision of the VKP(b) Central Committee Politburo," Moscow, 24 May 1937.

15. It is worthy of note that in Moscow, according to an unambiguous statement by Stalin, the material supplied by Prague was received with "particular gratitude." For this reason the Politburo stated its willingness to conclude a "military convention beneficial for Czechoslovakia" with Prague and as a "sign of close ties" invited on an official visit to Moscow military, economic and cultural delegations as well as the Minister of Foreign Affairs Krofta and to make a visit by Litvinov to Prague. Soviet literature of recent years has openly admitted that in the USSR itself the material sent from Prague to Moscow was not checked out at all due to the "atmosphere of mutual suspicion" and the "mistrust of Stalin who saw treachery everywhere" and "was viewed as unconditionally reliable." See: "History of the Great Patriotic War of the Soviet Union," East Berlin, Vol 1, 1962, p 118.

16. Circular of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of 30 May 1937, No 211, 235/37, Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Prague.

17. Ambassador Pavlu was in error when he in his message of 15 June asserted that Tukhachevskiy's fate had been settled only on 1-4 June at a session of the Higher Military Council on the basis of a report by Voroshilov. From the above-quoted Politburo decision it is clearly obvious that this happened on 24 May, that is, 2 days before Tukhachevskiy's arrest. Messages From Pavlu to Krofta From Moscow of 11 May and 12 June, 1937, Nos 40, 49 and 316, Archives of Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Prague.

18. Message From Pavlu to Krofta From Moscow of 20 June, Moscow, 1937, No 50, Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Prague.

19. Message From Aureliano to Bucharest From Prague of 13 June 1937, No 71/1937-40 C 1, Archives of Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Romania in Bucharest. On 21 July, Benes endeavored to persuade the General Director of the Industrial Bank, Dr Preiss, the most powerful leader of the Czechoslovak economy, of the need to eliminate Tukhachevskiy. 1937. S, VI/1-1/15, 1936, 1937, Archives of the State Bank in Prague.

20. Message From Newton to the British Foreign Office From Prague of 21 June 1937, No 3287, FO/371, Vol 21104, PRO in London.

21. Message From Carr to the U.S. State Department From Prague of 18 September 1937, FRUS/1. Washington, 1954, p 130 et seq.

22. Report From Newton to the British Foreign Office From Prague of 19 March 1938. No 1622, FO/371, Vol 22286, PRO in London.

23. Report From Lt Col Dastih to the Military Chancellory of the Republic President From Moscow of 23 June, 6 and 21 July, 14 and 31 August, 23 September and 12 October 1937, Cav. No 2399, 2514, 2921, 3209, 3401, 3798 and 4198, VKPR, Military History Archives in Prague. See also: Boris Tselovskiy, "Myunkhenskoye soglasheniye 1938 goda" [The Munich Agreement of 1938], a pamphlet, Stuttgart, 1958, pp 89-92.

24. Terrible. The trial is...the flower of our high command, Mikhail Tukhachevskiy! The pride of the Red Army! The glory of its victories! A great organizer!... I try to understand and explain to myself the historical necessity of this murder. This is monstrously hard.... After each marshal they execute several hundred officers from his group. Blood requires blood. Where is the limit to all of this?" Maksim Litvinov, "Vospominaniya. Iz taynykh dnevnikov" [Memoirs. From the Secret Diaries], Munich, 1956, p 246.

25. Report by Schulenburg to the German Ministry of Foreign Affairs From Moscow of 15 May 1937, V Political Directorate, Pol. 13 for Russia. T.1, PA AA in Bonn.

26. Message From Pavlu to Krofta From Moscow of 2 August 1937, Moscow, No 61, Archives of Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Prague.

27. "If Tukhachevskiy's plans had been carried out," Fierlinger informed Benes from Moscow, "he would probably have tried to set up a military dictatorship.... It is not surprising that the opposition also very quickly found contact with Tukhachevskiy and the other generals. At present, the description of Tukhachevskiy as a political adventurer ready for anything is clear and sufficiently definite so there can be no doubts on his role. Tukhachevskiy in time would have become the all-powerful boss of the army and for this reason have gradually promoted his friends to important leadership positions. He completely understood the role and importance of the army in the state in a spirit of the German generals whom he envied in line with their status in Germany and whom he admired. For this reason he found it difficult to accept the interference of political bodies and endeavored to free himself of their influence." A similar view was maintained by the Chairman of the Military Committee of the Chamber of Deputies in Czechoslovakia Josef David who was also a confidant of Benes. On 30 June 1938, he stated openly that Tukhachevskiy "intended to overthrow Stalin and turn over the Ukraine to the Germans." See: Message From Fierlinger of 26 March 1938. Zdenek Fierlinger, "In Service of Czechoslovakia," Prague, Vol 1, 1951, p 54 et.

seq.; report of Charge d'affaires Henke to German Ministry of Foreign Affairs From Prague of 23 July 1938. V Political Directorate/455, Pol. 2 for Russia, Political Relations of Russia With Germany. Vol 1, PA AA in Bonn.

28. The Czechoslovak press to a significant degree shared the view of the leadership of Czechoslovak foreign policy about the Tukhachevskiy case. The only difference between the communist and noncommunist publications was in the references of the Liberal and Social Democratic press about the weakening of the Red Army as a consequence of the purges and this was passionately disputed by the communist press, sometimes rather aggressively (RUDE PRAVO, 12, 13, 15 and 16 June 1937). Only very rarely in the noncommunist press did references appear to the unpredictability and mysteriousness of the development of the situation in the Soviet Union. Much more frequently in it one finds all sorts of judgments about the reasons for the removal of Tukhachevskiy. Everywhere one can encounter all sorts of interpretations such as "The End of the Red Napoleon" (CESKO SLOVO, 12 June 1937) or "The Struggle for the Return of Imperial Power" (ibid., 7 February). Noteworthy is the article "A Harsh But Necessary Service by Stalin to Europe" (ibid., 23 June). This points out that "disappointment with Stalin's policy has brought together three elements: the Trotskyite Bolsheviks, the Rightist Mensheviks and the German General Staff. The unification of these three heterogeneous elements then led to the greatest and most cynical organization of betrayal, espionage and depravity. There must be no doubt that by the executing of the traitor-generals the Soviet government has saved itself from a coup. But there also must not be any doubt that the executions which saved the Soviet government also save peace in Europe." Only the Leftist Liberals found the courage to raise disconcerting questions: what value does an ally have if its army is headed by saboteurs and spies (LIDOVE NOVINY, 12 June 1937). The specialist on the situation in the Soviet Union and expert on the works of Lenin, Jan Slavik, to a certain degree had approached the heart of the matter: "The army of Soviet Russia at present does not have a single general whom the majority would follow. On the contrary, in the government group there is a personality which actually has great popularity in Russia. Stalin is this personality. He did not come from the professional military but the development of events has forced him to play the role of a military dictator. For this precisely it was essential to guarantee support for him from the army by eliminating the unreliable influences, particularly those which were dissatisfied with the direction in which Stalin was leading the nation" (NARODNI OSVOBOZENI, 12 June 1937). During the period between the end of June and mid-July, Benes issued instructions to publish as the official Czechoslovak viewpoint his conviction that Tukhachevskiy was maintaining contacts with Germany, however here the note was to be added that the alliance with the USSR had never been the only possibility of Czechoslovak foreign policy and that careful criticism in

the assessment of the Soviet Union is obviously completely permissible (ibid., 25 June and 13 July).

29. "Events in France in the Period From 1933 Through 1945. Evidence and Documents Collected by the Commission for Parliamentary Investigation. Report Submitted on Behalf of the Commission of the National Assembly, Paris, Vol 1, 1946, pp 128 et seq. The assertion by Churchill and Reynaud that Benes had informed Blum of the Tukhachevskiy conspiracy" at the end of 1936 through the son of the French prime minister who was visiting Prague (see: W. Churchill, op. cit., p 224; Paul Reynaud, "At the Center of Events 1930-1945," Paris, 1951, p 97) is based upon a confusion with the personal message from Benes to Blum of 18 December 1936 and concerns the question of a military convention. Moreover, at the end of 1936, Benes could not know anything at all about the "guilt" of Tukhachevskiy. As was already pointed out, the telegram from Mastny of 9 February 1937 was his first information. This erroneous information has also been used by Ericson (see: John Ericson, "Higher Military Command of the Soviet Union; Military Political History 1918-1941," London, 1962, p 433).

30. The opinion of the ambassador who asserted "it is as if it was already a question of the ideological and psychological preparations of the Red Army and the Soviet public for military events in Central Asia" also made no impression in Prague. Message From Pavlu to Krofta From Moscow of 29 April and 21 August, 1937, Moscow, No 35 and 69, Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Prague.

31. Message From Biddle to the U.S. State Department from Warsaw of 2 April 1938, DSDF/760, F. 62/191, NA Washington. However, here it is a question of only one statement by Benes who in the rest greatly underestimated the consequences of the purges.

32. Memorandum from eisenlohr "Czechoslovak Foreign Policy in 1938" to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs from Prague of 12 January 1938, ADAP, Ser. D., Baden-Baden, Vol II, 1950, No 47, p 79.

33. "Munich in Documents," Vol II, No 26.

34. Note of the Ambassador J. Smutny, chief of the president's chancellory, of his conversation with Benes, London, No 41, 23 June, "Documents on the History of Czechoslovak Policy in 1939-1941," Prague, Vol I, 1966, No 193, p 234.

(Conclusion follows)

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'I Was in a Blocking Detachment'

00010004g Moscow VOYENNO-ISTORICHESKIY
ZHURNAL in Russian No 11, Nov 88 (signed to press
26 Oct 88) pp 57-61

[Article by Capt 2d Rank S.G. Ishchenko: "I Was in a Blocking Detachment"]

[Text] This year the August issue of our journal for the first time completely published the order of the USSR People's Commissar of Defense No. 227 of 28 July 1942. The response by the readers to this publication was instantaneous. The editors immediately began receiving letters. Many of them ended with a request to describe the blocking detachments mentioned in the order. The material provided by Capt 2d Rank S.G. Ishchenko brings out one of the little known pages of the Great Patriotic War.

Probably we would not find anyone who is now indifferent to history. We are looking closely to the past and it is as if the fog was lifting. What we yesterday did not mention at all, left unsaid or whispered is now being discussed openly. Among other things, suddenly something appears which is a shock for many. How much we have heard or read recently in detail, for instance, on the history of the last war? It is beyond counting. How many truths which seemed unshakable have been put to doubt! Certain in the zeal to unmask are ready to declare us loudly not the winners but the vanquished.

One comrade recently admitted that he cannot escape from the sensation that much that he has read in the memoirs of our respected military leaders is a half-truth. It seems like he is right. But if this is a half-truth, why not the whole truth in the books of the intelligent and honest generals and marshals? For an answer to this question one could turn to the memoirs of A.D. Mirkina published by the journal OGONEK and who was one of the editors of the memoirs of MSU G.K. Zhukov. She, of course, better than others knows how tortuously hard Georgiy Konstantinovich [Zhukov] worked for each line of his manuscript, however did not always conquer it. What was not kept within what was permitted from above was mercilessly crossed out. Bitter and bloody, the war in our encyclopedias and textbooks of history, in the memoirs and artistic literature was covered with a thick layer of varnish. Today, when the time has come to bring out the entire truth, including about the war, much which has been hitherto under the varnish is frightening and arouses strong passions. For example, the blocking detachments.

During the current summer workers from the archives participated in one of the broadcasts of the Moscow Program of Central Television. They rightly complained of the excessive secrecy of their departments. Things have reached such a point one said, that prominent historians could not secure the publishing of the widely remembered Order No. 227 known under the name "Not a Step to the Rear!" The commentator understandingly nodded: "Well yes, that was about the blocking

detachments." This was said in such a tone that it was clear that the blocking detachments were something so terrible, so inhuman and discrediting to us and our army that it is terrible to recall them. We, supposedly, know all about it....

This leitmotiv that "we know all about it" is rather frequently encountered in the letters precisely about the blocking detachments. Let us take up some of them. "The Stalin blocking detachments were organized from the NKVD [People's Commissariat of Internal Affairs]. They were sent up from the rear and fired on our own without any investigation. They themselves sat in the rear twiddling their thumbs. They skillfully pushed people into the meat grinder...." "Because of Order No. 227, it often happened that a troop subunit which had run out of ammunition or where the guns had failed was forced to die or be captured. Certainly in retreating the barrels of the blocking detachments were waiting for the men. Was this not a stupid death for the men?"

The most disconcerting thing in these letters, in my view, is the tone. Without any doubt no argument is to be permitted as "we know all about it...." But how do the authors know the "whole truth" about the blocking detachments? This is not even mentioned in the current books and encyclopedias. As is known, where there are no facts their place is taken by emotion. Even more, I propose, such "truth" comes from some oral recollections made up not without evil intent. What, in essence are these letters about? What conclusion comes from them? Quite obvious ones. Do you speak about the mass heroism and self-sacrifice of our soldiers? Did they not sacrifice themselves in battle? Did they not throw themselves under tanks with grenades? But what could they have done with the submachine gun barrels of the blocking detachment troops at the back of their head? A friendly bullet is no sweeter than a German one.... Thus, the sacred is put into doubt.

Each year the editors of newspapers and magazines receive thousands of letters from frontline veterans. These come from mortar troops and sailors, infantrymen, pilots and tank troops.... Many write but not once—not once!—will you hear of any colleague who even encountered a letter with the words: "I was in the blocking detachments." With this universal "knowledge" about the blocking detachments. Who can decide? A disdainful glance is the most harmless of all the expected responses.

Why have we been quiet for so many years? This notion repeatedly flashed through my mind when I became acquainted in Podolsk with the archival materials relating to the actions of the blocking detachments during the years of the Great Patriotic War. The check-out slips of these time-yellowed files are virgin pure. None of the researchers has ever worked with them. Incidentally, I understand why. It is as if we have no officially approved military history of the blocking detachments. At the

same time, the pages of the files hold information not only of human dramas and bitter tragedies but also authentic heroism. What is the truth about a war without either?

What have we been afraid of? To admit that on the front there were not only heroes but also cowards, feint-hearted, those who sought to save their own skins, pillagers and deserters? But in what was, please tell me, in what army did these not exist? We have more than enough of this sort of people in peacetime. What can one say about a front where they fire, maim and murder and, it does happen, order you to your death. However, in our army there were many fewer deserters and cowards than there were in the enemy and a hundred-fold more heroes. That is why we were victorious and not the Nazis.

When did the blocking detachments appear in our country? After the issuing of Order No. 227 in July 1942? Nothing of the sort! There is the following curious document: "The organizing of the blocking detachments represents one of the most important tasks of the commanders and commissars. Each major troop formation should have behind it at least a thin but strong and dependable network of blocking detachments.... The agility and impunity of the deserters are capable of spoiling the best part. A young soldier who endeavors to escape from fire in encountering it for the first time should encounter a firm hand which forcefully turns him back with a warning of the severe punishment for all violators of military duty. An inveterate coward should encounter a revolver or run on a bayonet...." This is Order No. 213 of the RVS [Revolutionary Military Council] of the Western Front of 1920. There has always been a fight against cowards and panicking troops in any war, in all armies of the world. If the fight against them was not sufficiently decisive then the armies suffered a defeat.

What was the situation on the front, when Order No. 227 was issued? I was able to locate several persons who had fought in the blocking detachments. One of them was Nikolay Antonovich Sukhnosenko, a CPSU member since May 1943 and decorated with the Orders of the Red Star, Patriotic War 2d Degree and several medals. He wrote: "At that time when Order No. 227 came out, I was an officer candidate at the school for junior specialists of the topographic service and which, after evacuation from Kharkov, was located in Yessentuki. It was a witness and participant in that terrible retreat of our troops (if one can so call the disordered pullback of a mass of men in uniform) from Rostov-na-Donu to the Caucasus. At that time, while still quite young, I viewed that terrible flight under the pressure of the Nazi troops armed to the teeth as a catastrophe. Now, with the passage of the years, it becomes even more terrible for one reason: what could have happened if harsh but essential measures had not been taken to organize the

troops defending the Caucasus? With the establishing of the blocking detachment, the school's officer candidates, including myself, became involved in their actions. We participated in blocking the soldiers and commanders fleeing from the front and we also guarded the wine cellar, the canning plant and the grain elevator which were in Yessentuki and which had come under attack by this disorganized mass of military. We stopped the retreaters for 2 days at Yessentuki. As we accumulated groups of approximately 100 men, the retreaters were escorted to assembly points. Then they were put on the defensive."

I examined many documents, I spoke with more than one frontline veteran who knew about the blocking detachments not by hearsay and I can assert that what was written by the former assistant platoon commander for topographic reconnaissance, N.A. Sukhnosenko, was the main undertaking of the blocking detachments, that is, to encourage the vacillating, to help the confused gain confidence, to threaten the coward, to return all to the trenches and force them to stand to the last. This was said best of all, in my view, by Sr Lt (Ret) Dmitriy Yevgenyevich Tsvetkov, who initially served in regimental reconnaissance and then in a blocking detachment: "This was the screen. Just as a fence is propped up which could collapse, so we propped up the front."

Possibly those who have heard about the executions on the spot without a court and evidence or about the other terrors which were supposedly involved with the border detachments would be dubious of these reminiscences of the veterans. There are few who can remember what they saw. Possibly others saw and recall something quite different? In this instance, I feel, there is nothing more convincing than the documents written in the trenches. In front of me is the combat log of the 4th Separate Blocking Detachment of the 52d Army. It was commenced on 5 August 1942, when the army was part of the Volkhov Front. What was the detachment involved in during the summer and autumn of this year? It was being organized. According to Order No. 227, the blocking detachments were to receive only the most experienced and tested soldiers. However, it turned out, life somehow on the front was similar to our own present day. Who, what director, would voluntarily release a good worker from his plant or factory? The commanders also were reticent to send the best fighters. Each day that the organizing was underway, the blocking detachment received 20-30 soldiers and commanders. Every day one or two were sent back as not meeting the strict demands. The front could entrust its immediate rear only to absolutely dependable and desperately brave soldiers. Two-thirds in the detachment were communists and Komsomol members.

What else? The detachment trained. No, not in how to shoot at our fleeing troops but rather how to defend oneself and advance. Its task also included guarding the crossings over the Volkhov River. Blocking posts of two or three men were set out on all the roads running from

the forward edge. Again, judging from the documents, not a day passed when the troops of the blocking detachment did not apprehend 10 or 15 wanderers who had lost their units. Anyone who has been in the woods near the Volkhov knows that it was not wise to lose one's way there, all the more when there was firing and minefields around. Those persons who had gone astray were returned to the units. You will say that for such matters you do not need fire-tested soldiers. But certainly deserters were also apprehended and they, as is known, were often armed and knew that they would be threatened by court martial if they got caught.

Here, for example, are the battle reports from the 3d Separate Blocking Detachment of the 8th Army of the Volkhov Front. The difference in them is merely in the dates, the last names, the figures and geographic names. For this reason I will give just one for 27 September 1942: "1. Over the last 24 hours the enemy has been conducting weak artillery fire. 2. The detachment is located at the old place. 3. The detachment is engaged in the standing of duty for the blocking posts.... 5. On 27 September, the detachment apprehended 38 persons without documents. They were sent back to their units.¹

I have intentionally omitted the fourth point because it probably would be quite surprising for those who thirst for the total truth about the blocking detachments. The truth in the 3d Separate Blocking Detachment on that day was as follows: "4. In repelling an enemy attack, Sgts Aleksey Savelyevich Tarasyuk and Semen Vasilyevich Belashev and Red Armyman Ivan Vasilyevich Kuleshov died a death of the brave in the second company. In artillery shelling in the area of the Rusanovskaya Platform, Sgt Yefim Gavrilovich Istomin, MSgt Vasily Lavrentovich Nikolayev and Red Armyman Vasily Aleksandrovich Gordeyev and Vasily Yevdokimovich Kosachenko were killed."² The best and most reliable fighters in the army. Who but they would be put in the most dangerous sections? And they were put there. At the end of the report is the conclusion that the losses were particularly high in the second company in recent days because the commander of the 265th Rifle Division to whom the company was temporarily subordinate had been employing it for conducting a reconnaissance in force.

It is hard for me to refrain from the frequent quoting of the documents. How else can one convince those who feel that they know the "entire truth" about the blocking detachments, that is, those whose evil letters are quoted above? For this reason I permit myself one other excerpt from the combat log of the 4th Separate Blocking Detachment of the 52d Army. This entry was made on 30 May 1944. The army at that time had already approached Romania and was fighting on the Prut River. "At 0900 hours, a German offensive commenced against elev. 197.0. A part of the soldiers from different units of the army rushed toward the Prut River to the crossings, where they were stopped by the blocking posts of our detachment. As a result, around 300 men were

apprehended and returned to the forward edge. During the standing of duty at the crossing, Sr Sgt A.G. Nikolaev and Jr Sgt I.T. Yurchenko were killed while Sr Lt N.G. Mikhalev and Pfc S.I. Ofitserov sustained concussions."³

There are no explanations for this. But imagine for a moment a panic-struck crowd of 300 persons who have abandoned their trenches and have rushed to the crossing with the sole desire of saving themselves. Just imagine what it took for it to return the mob now armed to the trenches, to turn and face the enemy and force it to fight. What a scramble this was if two were killed and two wounded in the blocking detachment. And now say whether the blocking detachments were necessary?

Amazing coincidences occur in life. The newspaper KRASNAYA ZVEZDA on 11 June 1988 published a letter from Lt Col (Ret) V. Monastyrskiy "Battle on the Hill." The hill was the same elev. 197.0. And the same battle. The letter describes the feat of a group of our soldiers under the command of Sr Lt S.Ya. Stepanov. They were attacked by more than a score enemy tanks. Our troops hit five of them with grenades. The remaining six still broke through across the positions. Then the communist S.Ya. Stepanov attaching grenades to himself, threw himself under one of the vehicles. The commander's feat was immediately repeated by Sr Lt I.S. Nazarov and the Red Armyman V.A. Tumor and S.I. Kuleshov. The four Tigers came to a halt engulfed in flames. The remainder crept back.

Was the 4th Separate Blocking Detachment set out on the crossing for them, for Stepanov and his men? Or for the thousands of soldiers from the 254th Rifle Division which on the same day defended elev. 197.0? No, of course not. It was for those 300 who did not endure the attacks and fled their positions. And possibly had they not run away Stepanov and his soldiers would not have to have thrown themselves under the tracks with grenades. Who knows? But taking altogether: Stepanov and his subordinates, those 300 vacillators and the troops of the blocking detachment—the Germans were still stopped and the bridgehead not surrendered. That is the truth.

I, like many others, am interested in the question: did the men of the blocking detachments fire on their own troops? Did they fire at troops who were fleeing or retreating, at deserters? Or did they not? I could only find one direct piece of evidence on this question. It was in the letter of N.A. Sukhonosenko. He wrote: "Weapons were employed once when a car did not stop upon our signal. Fire was opened against the wheels. As a result we apprehended the commanders in the vehicle, the senior in rank, a colonel. I know of no other instances."

There is nothing more neither in the archival documents nor the memoirs. In truth, we should reflect on that entry in the combat log of the 4th Separate Blocking Detachment which dates to 30 May 1944. How did they succeed

in stopping at the crossing those 300 cowards who had deserted their trenches? Possibly by force of arms? I do not know. But even if that was the case? Should this really shock us? Should we really be ashamed of this? Not because they fled and left the front but because they brought the cowards to their senses by all available means? No, it was essential to stop the cowards at any price, otherwise the motherland could have perished. The war had already reached the Volga. But the colonel, evidently, was ready to stop only behind the Urals. Cowards and panicking troops have always been executed, in all armies of the world. Or did we not know this? Would they then be silent about the blocking detachments?

One other entry from the log of the 4th Separate Blocking Detachment which I would like to quote. It was made on 7 August 1944, not long before the detachment was inactivated. In it is the result of a larger portion of the route covered by the blocking detachment: "They prepared to celebrate the day of the unit's formation. The personnel had a wash in the bathhouse, changed their undergarments and put their weapons and uniforms in order.... At 1800 hours a ceremony was held at which the detachment's commander, Maj Borysychev, gave a report, summing up the results of the detachment's work over the year. Over the year the detachment had apprehended 1,415 men, including 30 spies, 36 headmen, 42 policemen, 10 translators and so forth. For the outstanding execution of the command's assignments, 29 men were awarded orders and 49 medals in the detachment. The detachment has fought its way from the Don to the Prut River, covering a distance of 1,300 km.... During the year 83 population points have been combed, including 8 cities. The personnel conducted both offensive and defensive battles in the area of the Dnieper, the village of Belozerya, the town of Smola and others. As a result, 7 population points were liberated.... Over the year, the detachment lost 11 men killed and 40 wounded. The detachment's party organization grew. Some 29 persons were admitted to the ranks of the VKP(b) [All-Union Communist Party (Bolshevik)] and 30 as candidate members."⁴

I do not see anything unworthy in our glorious military history. Whom did the blocking detachments protect against what? Ultimately you and I, our nation were protected against enemies and cowards which, incidentally, on the front are also enemies. Whom should be shocked by this and why?

You can't mention everything. But in detail I remember the story of the former blocking detachment member D.Ye. Tsvetkov about what happened in November 1942 on the Kalinin Front. I see, I see almost too clearly the pine forest of fabulous beauty and of which there are so many in Russia, illuminated by the setting sun. On the edge of the forest was the blocking detachment. Behind there was no one, only the open road to our rear. Ahead, behind the brush, a molten line of trenches, the chatter of firing and the roar of enemy tanks. The task confronting

Tsvetkov and his comrades was in accord with Order No. 227: "Not a Step to the Rear!" If our troops, those in front, fled and did not hold out then they were to be halted and turned back to the defense. But no one fled. The defense in front of the blocking detachment was wiped away. The tanks with the crosses lumbered across the brush at the blocking detachment troops. Tsvetkov fingered the ribbed side of the grenade....

The rest was terrible. Just how I do not know. Tsvetkov twice tried to describe it, but could not: he was choked by spasms and tears. Giving up, he intended to leave. He put on his coat hanging on the chair. On it was the Order of the Red Star, two Orders of the Patriotic War, medals and stripes for wounds—four severe and two light. And if someone says that they sat it out in the rear, don't believe it!

Footnotes

1. TsAMO SSSR [Central Archives of the USSR Ministry of Defense], file 10, inv. 36256, sheet 37.
2. Ibid.
3. Ibid., file 12, inv. 41259, sheet 48.
4. Ibid., sheet 52.

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What Were the Facts?

00010004h Moscow VOYENNO-ISTORICHESKIY
ZHURNAL in Russian No 11, Nov 88 (signed to press
26 Oct 88) pp 62-70

[Article, published under the heading "Documents and Materials": "What Were the Facts?"]

[Text] The September issue of the journal this year published the Order of Headquarters Supreme High Command [Hq SHc] of the Red Army, No. 270 of 16 August 1941. It states: "...We cannot conceal the fact that recently there have been several notorious facts of surrendering to the enemy. Individual generals have set a bad example for our troops." Then virtually the entire order is devoted precisely to these few generals who supposedly had voluntarily surrendered to the enemy.

"The Commander of the 28th Army, Lt Gen Kachalov, being together with the troop group staff in an encirclement, showed cowardice and surrendered to the Nazis."

"Lt Gen Ponedelin, Commander of the 12th Army, being surrounded by the enemy...gave way to panic, turned coward and surrendered to the enemy, he deserted to the enemy, having thus committed a crime to the motherland as a violator of the military oath."

"The Commander of the XIII Rifle Corps, Maj Gen Kirillov, in being surrounded by the Nazi troops...deserted the battlefield and surrendered to the enemy."

What were the facts? An analysis of the materials from the investigation conducted in 1941 shows that the accusations raised in Order No. 270 against the generals were drawn up hurriedly and without any grounds for this. The facts bespeak this eloquently. Lt Gen V.Ya. Kachalov perished in the fighting on 4 August. An error was made in the order even as to the military rank of Maj Gen P.G. Ponedelin (in the order he was called a lieutenant general).

We offer to the readers certain documents on the case of Gens V.Ya. Kachalov, V.G. Ponedelin and N.G. Kirillov. They show that the charges made against the generals in August 1941 were unfounded. This was shown by a thorough investigation conducted significantly later. The materials have been prepared for publication with the aid of co-workers from the Military Collegium of the USSR Supreme Court.

From the materials of the accusation made it follows that on 4 August 1941, the former commander of the 28th Army, Lt Gen Vladimir Yakovlevich Kachalov, had surrendered to the enemy.

On this day, during the fighting of the units of the 28th Army on the Western Front in the area of Roslavl, two leaflets dropped from an enemy aircraft were delivered to Kachalov's command post near the village of Starinka.

Kachalov read aloud the contents of the leaflets of which one served as a pass to the enemy and he asked the commanders who were with him who needed the leaflet.

Everyone answered in silence, having accepted Kachalov's question as an awkward joke. Then Kachalov, folding the leaflet in four and putting it in the pocket of his tunic, said: "Perhaps I may need it."

After this, remaining around 1 hour at the command post and seeing the disordered retreat of certain army units from the village of Starinka, he did not take any measures to instill order. Then in front of the servicemen surrounding him, Kachalov got in a tank and headed off to the village of Starinka which was enemy-occupied....

On the basis of what was stated, Lt Gen Vladimir Yakovlevich Kachalov, the former commander of the 28th Army, born in 1890, coming from the town of Gorodishche in the rayon of the same name of Stalingrad Oblast, the former member of the VKP(b) [All-Union Communist Party (Bolshevik)], awarded two Orders of the Red Banner and the medal Twenty Years of the RKKA [Worker-Peasant Red Army], deputy of the RSFSR Supreme Soviet, former officer in the Tsarist

Army, married and without criminal record, is accused of betraying the motherland on 4 August 1941 in a combat situation on the Western Front, in the area of Roslavl in the village of Starinka, going over to the side of the enemy. On the grounds of the current RSFSR Criminal Procedural Code, on 27 September a decision was taken to condemn V.Ya. Kachalov in absentia.

As follows from the sentence of 29 September 1941, the former commander of the 28th Army, Lt Gen Vladimir Yakovlevich Kachalov, was condemned to execution in absentia.

The grounds for such a severe sentence against V.Ya. Kachalov were Order No. 270 of Hq SHC of 16 August 1941 which pointed out that the Commander of the 28th Army, Lt Gen V.Ya. Kachalov, had shown cowardice, he had deserted and gone over to the side of the Nazi troops.

The investigation made in 1941 established that on 4 August 1941, the German troops in the region of the village of Starinka, Stodolishchenskiy Rayon of Smolensk Oblast, having breached the defenses of our 28th Army, were pushing in between its 122d and 145th Divisions. At the end of the day of 4 August, Kachalov was at his staff in the 122d Division preparing to break out of the encirclement and then unexpectedly drove off in a tank toward the enemy troops and since then none of the army staff servicemen had seen him again.

In line with the complaints from Kachalov's relatives and letters from generals and officers who knew Kachalov and who doubted the possibility of Kachalov's treason, an additional investigation was conducted and this established that Lt Gen Kachalov had not surrendered to the Nazi troops, but rather from 4 August 1941, in traveling in the tank in the area of Starinka Village, where scattered units and subunits of the 28th Army were fighting, together with the crew perished from German artillery fire and was buried by the local inhabitants in a common grave.

This circumstance was confirmed by the testimony of witnesses who lived in the village of Starinka: N.V. Kuzmin, V.K. Muchkin, A.V. Andreyev and V.F. Zaytsev as well as by an act of a commission of 6 November 1952 which reburied the remains and put the graves in order.

In the review of the IX German Army Corps captured by our troops, it states: "At this time the Commander of the 28th Army Kachalov fell with his staff and together with a particularly strong tank group had been endeavoring to break through Starinka but ultimately was stopped and did not get passed."

The generals and officers who had known Kachalov for many years in army service and on the front described him in a positive manner.

An additional investigation established that Kachalov had not shown confusion or cowardice in the period of combat and his departure toward the enemy which had pushed into the positions of units of the 28th Army, it must be assumed, was caused by a desire to reach his 145th Division cut off from the army staff.

Thus, Lt Gen Vladimir Yakovlevich Kachalov, according to incomplete materials of an investigation which did not establish the fact of the surrendering of Kachalov, in 1941 was unjustly condemned in absentia to execution for betraying the motherland....

The additional investigation conducted in 1952 established that Lt Gen Kachalov had not surrendered to the enemy, but rather on 4 August 1941, in the region of the village of Starinka in Smolensk Oblast in fighting was killed by German artillery fire and was buried by local inhabitants in a common grave.

This circumstance was confirmed by the testimony of witnesses who lived in the village of Starinka, Muchkin, Zaytsev...and others, and by an act of the commission of 6 November 1942 which reburied the remains and put the graves in order as well as by a captured document of the IX German Army Corps taken by Soviet troops.

The generals and officers of the Soviet Army who had known Kachalov for many years of service in the army and on the front, in being questioned in the trial, gave affirmative recommendations to him, Kachalov.

Thus, Kachalov in September 1941 had been unjustly condemned in absentia to betraying the motherland, and on 23 December 1953, the sentence was repealed.

Thus, the ruling of 29 September 1941 on instituting proceedings against the Kachalov family members was also repealed.

Autobiography of Lt Gen Vladimir Yakovlevich Kachalov

I was born in May 1890, in the village of Gorodishche, Stalingrad Oblast, my parents were engaged in agriculture and later moved to Stalingrad and for 25-30 years prior to 1917, was engaged as a cobbler. Initially, my father worked several years as a hired cobbler and then worked independently, alone, without hired labor and for approximately the last 17-18 years before the revolution, had a cobbler shop and booth at the market where he sold ready-made footwear. At the beginning of 1917, for debts the cobbler shop and booth were liquidated by creditors and my father again from 1917 resettled at the

farm 10 km from the city and began to engage in agriculture which he did until 1931. My father died in 1940 and my mother in 1928.

I am married, I have a son born in 1932. My wife Yelena Nikolayevna Khanchin is the daughter of a physician who recently worked as a physician in Kazakhstan and my wife's mother was a teacher. From my early years I helped my father in his work and from the age of 12 went to school, I completed the parish church school, the city school and in 1910, completed the Kharkov Commercial School. After completing my studies I was called up into military service as fit for service and in 1912 was demobilized into the reserves. After military service, I worked for more than a year as an accountant, preparing at the same time for admission to an institution of higher learning.

In August 1914, upon mobilization, I was called up from the reserves into the army and at the end of 1914, in the Kazan Military District, passed my exam for reserve warrant officer ["praporshchik"] and was sent as a junior officer to the 712th Infantry Militia and subsequently to the 23d Sibirsk Reserve Regiment and from here in a company of recruits was sent to the operational army to the Romanian Front in the 58th Regiment and where I remained until 1918 in the month of February in the positions of junior officer and company commander, and during the period of the revolution, I was elected the head of regimental administration and lastly regimental commander. In February 1918, I left the front for Stalingrad and in July 1918 volunteered for the ranks of the 10th Red Army (Tsaritsyn Front) in the 2d Composite Cossack Division as assistant divisional chief of staff. In September 1918, I was appointed group commander on the Tsaritsyn Sector in the area of Karpovka—Krivets Muza and later the combat sector Voronovka—Peschanka. In January 1919, I was appointed chief of staff of the 3d Brigade of the 38th Rifle Division and in July, chief of staff of the Separate Cavalry Brigade of the 38th Rifle Division, from September 1919 through February 1920, I was the chief of staff of the Composite Cavalry Corps and the I Cavalry Corps of the 9th Army. With the development of the cavalry corps into the 2d Cavalry Army (July 1920), I was appointed chief of the field staff of the 2d Cavalry Army and in October 1920, appointed commander of a cavalry division in this army and which I commanded until September 1922. From September 1922...I studied at the VAK [Higher Academy Courses] in Moscow and from here I was sent to the Turkestan Front to Eastern Bukhara where I was in command of the 1st Separate Cavalry Brigade and the 11th Cavalry Division until October 1924. After wounding I was appointed cavalry instructor of the Western Military District, a position which I held until 1925. From November 1925 through January 1931, I was in command of the 14th Cavalry Division and from January 1931 through November 1933, I was the commissar-commander of the 6th Rifle Division, from November 1933 through December 1935, I was studying in the Military Academy imeni M.V. Frunze on a special

faculty, after completing the academy until May 1936, I was on the Military Training Directorate of the Red Army, from May 1936 through July 1937, I was the commissar-commander of the 22d Rifle Division, and from July through December 1936, inclusively, I was in command of the IX Rifle Corps. From January 1938 through April, I was the deputy commander of the Northern Caucasus Military District, from April 1938 through June 1940, commander of the Northern Caucasus Military District, and from July 1940 until the present, the commander of the Arkhangelsk Military District.

I participated in the following battles against the Whites:

1. On the Tsaritsyn Front as part of the 10th Red Army from July 1918 through September 1919 in the positions of detachment commander, chief of staff of the 3d Brigade of the 38th Rifle Division and a separate cavalry brigade of the 38th Rifle Division.

2. As part of the 9th Army from September 1919 through April 1920 in eliminating Denikin in the position of chief of staff of a cavalry corps.

3. In the 13th Army and 2d Cavalry Army from June through November 1920 to eliminate Wrangel in the position of chief of staff of a cavalry corps and commander of the 2d Cavalry Division.

I participated in the fighting to eliminate banditry:

In the Ukraine against Makhno, from November 1920 through March 1921; in the Don to eliminate the bands in the area of the Cossack villages of Kamenets, Morozovskaya, Tsimlyanskaya and Chirskaya, from March through May 1921; in the Northern Caucasus to eliminate the bands in the area of Stavropol—Pyatigorsk, Mozdok, Svyatoy Krest, from May 1921 through December 1922. All this time I held the position of commander of the 2d Cavalry Division. In eastern Bukhara, to eliminate the Basmack from October 1923 through November 1924, in the position of commander of the 11th Cavalry Division.

I have five wounds: 1. In fighting at Varlamovskaya, September 1918. 2. In the fighting at Voronovo, January 1919. 3. A concussion in combat on the Manych River, May 1919. 4. In fighting against bandits in the region of Stavropol, August 1922. 5. In fighting against the Basmach in Bukhara in the area of Mirshad, December 1923.

I have been awarded two Orders of the Red Banner, the jubilee medal Twenty Years of the Red Army, two gold inscribed watches from the People's Commissariat of Defense.

Member of the VKP(b) since June 1927, party card No. 1013639, and admitted to party ranks by the Party Organization of the 10th Cavalry Division (presently, the 14th Cavalry Division), and as candidate member by

the party organization of the 2d Cavalry Division (now the 5th Cavalry Division). I do not have any party reprimands. I have not been a member of other party organizations. I have not been a member of the Trotskyite rightist national-chauvinistic and other counterrevolutionary organizations. I have not had any deviations from the general party line and have not participated in any antiparty groupings.

I have not served in the White Army and I have not lived on White-occupied territory. I have not been abroad and I do not have any close relatives abroad.

I have no criminal record.

Deputy of the RSFSR Supreme Soviet, First Sitting Lt Gen (Kachalov) 19 April 1941

P.G. Ponedelin was considered guilty because, while as commander of the 12th Army and being encircled by enemy troops, he did not show the requisite tenacity and will for victory, he gave in to panic and on 7 August 1941, having violated the military oath, he betrayed the motherland. Without resistance he surrendered to the Germans and in interrogation gave them information on the strength of the 12th and 6th Armies.

While in a prisoner of war camp, Ponedelin kept a diary which slandered one of the leaders of the party and the Soviet government, expressed anti-Soviet criticism of the policy of Soviet power toward collectivizing agriculture, he praised the enemy's of the people and slandered the combat capability of the Soviet troops.

In a court session, Ponedelin recognized his guilt but pointed out that he had taken every measure to lead the 12th and 6th Armies out of the encirclement, that he did not desert the battlefield but lacked the will power to take his own life at the moment he was captured by the Germans, that he did not release any information about the army units to the Germans and was not engaged in anti-Soviet agitation.

In his last word, Ponedelin stated that he could not be an enemy of the people and was incapable of being such. He asked the court to return him to society and allow him to work and rejoice along with all society.

The accusation against Ponedelin was based upon the testimony of witnesses questioned at a preliminary investigation. This came down to the fact that he supposedly did not take the necessary measures to lead the troops out of encirclement and without resisting surrendered to the Germans. This was based on the tentative testimony of the Chief of Staff of the 12th Army V.I. Arushanyan, the former Commander of the 99th Rifle Division P.P. Poyakin, and the former Regimental Commander of the 99th Rifle Division R.F. Zhevner who in

the preliminary investigation pointed out that Ponedelin's order of 1 August 1941 on the going over of the army to the defensive in the area of the village of Podvysokoye and then instructions on the procedure for breaking out of the encirclement were considered wrong by them and after they learned about Ponedelin's surrender, the designated decisions were judged traitorous by them.

Zhevner, in addition, pointed out that in speaking with others he had learned that at the moment of encirclement of the group of officers by the Germans, some of the officers wanted to fire but Ponedelin supposedly did not permit the firing and raised his hands, stating: "We will surrender."

Arushanyan and Opyakin, questioned in the process of the additional investigation in December 1955, changed their evidence given in 1941-1942, and stated that the description and evaluation of Ponedelin's actions had been given by the investigators on the basis of their evidence that they considered Ponedelin's orders wrong. Moreover, at that time still fresh in their memory was the order of Headquarters on declaring Ponedelin, Kirillov and other former commanders captured by the German troops as enemies of the people.

Opyakin, in addition, pointed out that when he was asked at the investigation whether the actions of Ponedelin and Kirillov were traitorous, he replied affirmatively, basing this answer on the fact that among the officers of his division (the names of whom he did not recall) there was talk that Ponedelin and Kirillov had abandoned their troops to their fate and themselves surrendered.

The evidence of Arushanyan, Opyakin and Zhevner given by them at the preliminary investigation in 1941-1942 was also repudiated by the following persons questioned in 1955 as witnesses: the former Chief of Staff of the 6th Army, Guards Maj Gen N.P. Ivanov, the former Commander of the 6th Army, Lt Gen (Ret) I.N. Muzychenko, the former member of the Military Council of the 6th Army, Maj Gen N.K. Popov, the former member of the Military Council of the 12th Army, Col (Ret) I.P. Kulikov and the former Artillery Commander of the 12th Army, Lt Gen N.V. Gavrilenko.

All these persons pointed out that Ponedelin, as the commander of the troop group of the 6th and 12th Armies, had done everything possible in order to break out of the encirclement in an extremely difficult situation;

That the remnants of the troop did not succeed in breaking out of the encirclement as a result of the difficult situation;

That the order of 1 August 1941 on organizing the defensive in the area of Podvysokoye had been given by Ponedelin with the knowledge of the military council

upon the instructions of the front command while instructions on the procedure for breaking out of the encirclement had also been issued by Ponedelin on the basis of the decision of the military council;

That they considered Ponedelin to be an honest Soviet officer.

From the evidence of the former Commander of the XIII Rifle Corps, Maj Gen Kirillov, and the former Chief of the Special Section of the Corps, Shishatskiy, it appears that Ponedelin was captured by the Germans unexpectedly for him and the other officers who were along with him on the edge of the forest during combat to break out of the encirclement of superior German troops.

From the testimony of persons captured along with Ponedelin, it was obvious that the representatives of the Nazi Command and the traitors of the motherland (Vlasov and other former officers in the Soviet Army) had repeatedly endeavored to win Ponedelin over to fighting against the USSR, however the latter categorically repudiated these proposals.

On the question of the anti-Soviet entries in his diary, Ponedelin explained that his notes being termed a diary were written by him in prison. In these notes he tried to depict the combat operations of the 6th and 12th Armies but, unfortunately, these notes were taken away by the Germans. In the notes he had actually written anti-Soviet slander against the kolkhoz system, but he had done this exclusively in the aim of concealment so that the Nazis would not understand the actual purpose of the notes and not take them from him.

He personally did not share anti-Soviet views, but Muzychenko, having read his notes, began speaking about them in private and hence there was talk that he, Ponedelin, had anti-Soviet views.

These statements by Ponedelin were in no way refuted.

At an interrogation on 13 December 1955, the witness Muzychenko merely confirmed that he had personally seen the diary in which Ponedelin, in setting out the reasons for the setbacks of the Soviet Army in 1941, had slandered the kolkhoz members.

Budykhov, Artemenko and Kirillov, in a review of their cases before the court, did not give evidence on anti-Soviet statements by Ponedelin.

The preliminary investigatory bodies had also accused Ponedelin that he was a participant in an anti-Soviet conspiracy.

This accusation was based upon very imprecise and contradictory evidence by Vetlin, Panteleyev, Lebedev and Morskoy-Derzhavets and which had been given by them after their arrest in 1937.

The evidence of these persons, proceeding from its content, does not instill any confidence.

This accusation against Ponedelin was repudiated in 1939, when the CPSU Central Committee discussed the question of promoting Ponedelin to the position of chief of staff of the Leningrad Military District.

A study of the party and official personal files on Ponedelin establishes that he had affirmative recommendations in service and in party activities.

Ponedelin had been awarded the Order of Lenin and two Orders of the Red Banner for active participation in the Civil War and for combat in the war against the White Finns.

An additional investigation disclosed new circumstances proving the invalid judgment against Ponedelin. On the basis of the above-stated, the sentence against P.G. Ponedelin was repealed on 13 March 1956.

Under the court sentence, Kirillov was charged with the fact that, as the commander of the XIII Rifle Corps and in being encircled by the enemy, betrayed the motherland in surrendering on 7 August 1941 without resisting the Germans and that in an interrogation provided German officers with secret information on the size of the corps units.

At a preliminary investigation and in court, Kirillov did not admit being guilty of betraying the motherland and pointed out that by heavy fighting the XIII Rifle Corps on 2 August 1941 had reached the area of Uman, where it was surrounded by German troops. As a result of the extended fighting against superior enemy forces, by 7 August 1941, the units of the corps had suffered losses of 90 percent in personnel and equipment. Under heavy machine gun and mortar fire, he, Kirillov, along with other officers had taken cover in a ditch on the edge of the forest. When the German troops began combing the forest and discovered them, he, Kirillov, lost his nerve and will power, he did not resist the Germans and surrendered, thereby committing a crime to the motherland.

In his last word, Kirillov stated that he was not an enemy of Soviet power and never would be.

The evidence of Potapov, Gerasimov, Sivayev, Abramidze, Dobroserdov, Skugarev, Artemenko, Zybin, Kudryavtsev, Meandrov, Opyakin and Arushanyan was used as evidence of Kirillov's guilt.

With the exception of Opyakin, none of the named individuals provided evidence compromising Kirillov.

At a preliminary investigation in August 1941, Opyakin had pointed out that Army Commander Ponedelin and the Commander of the XIII Rifle Corps Kirillov on 1 August had taken an incorrect decision to go over to the defensive instead of bringing the troops back behind the river. Without knowing completely the situation on the front and on the flanks, Ponedelin and Kirillov supposedly permitted the encirclement of the troops and did not organize their breaking out of the encirclement.

Furthermore, Opyakin pointed out that although he was not a witness of the surrender, in the words of others he learned that Ponedelin and Kirillov had surrendered to the Germans without a fight. After this he learned that the above-indicated actions by the command of the 12th Army were traitorous.

The former Chief of Staff of the 12th Army Arushanyan in 1942 pointed out that he considered Ponedelin's order of 1 August 1941 to go over to the defensive incorrect and when he learned of Ponedelin's surrender, he concluded that this order had a traitorous nature.

Thus, the accusation against Kirillov of betraying the motherland was based upon evidence by Opyakin and Arushanyan given by them in a preliminary investigation.

Questioned again in 1955, Opyakin and Arushanyan changed their evidence while a number of other witnesses questioned in the process of verification did not confirm the evidence of Opyakin and Arushanyan given by them in 1941-1942.

Thus, Opyakin in an interrogation on 13 December 1955 pointed out that Ponedelin and Kirillov had taken measures to bring their troops out of the encirclement but in his, Opyakin's, view, the order which they issued in August had a number of shortcomings.

Furthermore, Opyakin pointed out that when they asked him in 1941 whether the actions of Ponedelin and Kirillov had been traitorous, he replied affirmatively and drew this conclusion under the impression of the talk by officers in his, Opyakin's, division (he did not remember the names of the officers) that Ponedelin and Kirillov had supposedly abandoned their troops to their fate and themselves had surrendered.

Arushanyan in an interrogation on 16 December 1955 pointed out that the description and assessment of Ponedelin's actions in 1942 had been given not by him but by the investigator.

That Kirillov was considered the best corps commander in the army and he, Arushanyan, had retained the very best opinion about Kirillov until the very last moment when Kirillov was personally preparing the last breakout from the encirclement.

In the process of verification, the following persons were questioned: the former Chief of Staff of the 6th Army, Guards Maj Gen N.P. Ivanov, the former Commander of the 6th Army, Lt Gen (Ret) I.N. Muzychenko, the former member of the Military Council of the 6th Army, Maj Gen (Res) N.K. Popov, the former member of the Military Council of the 12th Army, Col (Ret) I.P. Kulikov, the former Artillery Chief of the 12th Army, Lt Gen N.V. Gavrilenko, the former Chief of Staff of the 99th Rifle Division, Maj Gen (Res) S.F. Gorokhov and the former Regimental Commander of the 72d Rifle Division, Maj Gen (Res) M.Ye. Khvatov.

All the designated persons pointed out that at the moment of Kirillov's capture, the troops which he commanded were in a severe combat situation and that the command of the army (Ponedelin) and the corps (Kirillov) took all of the necessary measures for bringing the troops out of encirclement.

The former Chief of the Special Section of the XIII Rifle Corps, Col (Res) T.K. Shishatskiy was a witness of Kirillov's capture and at an interrogation on 30 December 1955, he pointed out that he personally saw how during the fighting to break out of the encirclement, around 30 German soldiers suddenly descended on Kirillov who was with his aide, the corps commissar and several other officers on the edge of the wood and these soldiers captured Kirillov and the other officers. The combat situation was such that there was no opportunity to help the Kirillov group.

Personally he, Shishatskiy, had never noticed anything negative about Kirillov and the special section did not possess such data.

Thus, in the file there was no proof that Kirillov had surrendered to the Germans voluntarily and intentionally.

The accusation against Kirillov of giving away military secrets to the German Command was based solely on his testimony that when the Germans questioned him about the units making up the XIII Corps, their numbers and peacetime disposition, he was silent for a long time, and when the German officer interrogating him pulled out a card and named all the units of the corps, their numbers and peacetime disposition, he, Kirillov, confirmed the correctness of this information.

To the question of where the equipment of the corps had gone, he replied that it had been destroyed upon his, Kirillov's, orders before the fighting to break out of the encirclement.

This testimony by Kirillov does not provide grounds for judging him guilty of betraying the motherland.

From the party and service personal files on Kirillov it can be seen that both in service and in party activities he had positive recommendations.

The service recommendation of 27 July 1941 pointed out that in fighting against German Naziism, Kirillov had shown himself to be a strong-willed, decisive corps commander and that the rifle corps had carried out the battle tasks of the 12th Army Military Council honestly and on the stipulated date. On 23 February 1956, the sentence against N.K. Kirillov was repealed.

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Information on Yugoslav Army

00010004i Moscow VOYENNO-ISTORICHESKIY
ZHURNAL in Russian No 11, Nov 88 (signed to press
26 Oct 88) p 71

[Articles, published under the heading "In the Armies of the Socialist Countries"]

[Text]

Slovenia: Difference Over Individual Assessments of Yugoslav Military Council

The Slovenian leadership on 20 May released an announcement over the question of rumors that this economically most developed Yugoslav republic in March "scarcely avoided a military putsch."

The republic secretariat on information affairs in a separate release recalled that the Slovenian party leadership at one time expressed a difference of opinion over the individual positions of the Presidium of the Yugoslav Communist League Central Committee and the Yugoslav Military Council which asserted that attacks by a portion of the Slovenian press on the Yugoslav Army represent a part of a special war against Yugoslavia and its army and that in the given instance journalists were only executors....

The Belgrad newspaper POLITIKA EXPRES in an article by its own Ljubljana correspondent categorically rejected the rumors that the Military Council of the Yugoslav Armed Forces was preparing a military coup in Slovenia. The Commander of the Ljubljana Military District, Maj Gen Svetozar Visnic, in a statement to this newspaper termed as "rubbish and absurdity" what had been written by the Ljubljana newspaper MLADINA as well as the rumors which were being spread through Slovenia on the supposed reparations for a military putsch.

(YUGOSLAVSKIYE NOVOSTI, No 5, 1988, p 3).

Joze Smole on Relations of Slovenia and the Yugoslav People's Army

The chairman of the Socialist League of the Yugoslav Republic of Slovenia, Joze Smole, in the most decisive manner condemned the "uncultured and uncivilized" attempts to evoke an antiarmy mood and any appearance of a hostile stance in the attitude of the other Yugoslav peoples and the nationalities in Slovenia. Regardless of the fact that it was a question of individual excesses, they must be completely eradicated....

He warned in this regard that it was a question not only of differences in the views on events in Slovenia and the processes of democratization, but also certain excessive phenomena, including the publishing of insulting articles against the Yugoslav People's Army in the Slovenian youth press. We have responded to this and condemn this, said J. Smole....

(YUGOSLAVSKIYE NOVOSTI, No 6-7, 1988, p 3).

The Army Has Maintained Unity

In spite of the crisis which society has been living through for many years, the Yugoslav People's Army has maintained its might and moral-political unity, said the League Secretary for People's Defense, Col Gen Velko Kadievic, at a conference for the organization of the League of Communists in the Yugoslav People's Army.

The army in the future should develop its popular and all-Yugoslav character. For this efforts are needed not only by its men but also by all the progressive forces of Yugoslav society, emphasized the league secretary for people's defense.

An essential characteristic in the current situation in the nation, in the view of V. Kadievic, is the search on the part of socialistically inclined forces in society headed by the League of Yugoslav Communists for concrete ways for an escape from the crisis and further social development.

At the same time, the enemies of both socialism and the federative system of Yugoslavia, and of all stripes, are acting in an evermore organized, daring and aggressive manner to prevent the finding of such ways.

(YUGOSLAVSKIYE NOVOSTI, No 6-7, 1988, p 3).

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We Through the Eyes of Others

00010004j Moscow VOYENNO-ISTORICHESKIY
ZHURNAL in Russian No 11, Nov 88 (signed to press
26 Oct 88) pp 72-77

[Article, published under the heading "In the Armies of the NATO Countries," by R.G. Kersho Para: "We Through the Eyes of Others (On the Soviet-German Front: From the Experience of Wehrmacht Operations)"; the introduction

and translation were by Lt Col I.T. Fateyev; conclusion, for the beginning see: VOYENNO-ISTORICHESKIY ZHURNAL, No 10, 1988]

[Text]

The Enemy—The Soviet Army

The success of the Germans in May 1944 at Iasi can be explained chiefly by their correct assessment of Soviet tactics.... The motto "Know Your Enemy" has remained unchanged up to the present. The Soviet Army even now believes that the lessons of the Great Patriotic War are timely today.

Tactics

The German researchers have frequently commented on the slow response and lack of initiative by the Russians on the tactical level. All of this led to inevitable consequences. Mobile countermeasures provided great advantages because the Soviet commanders could easily be taken by surprise. The assaults were carried out so stereotypically that their start could be predicted with an accuracy down to an hour. Fear of making a mistake fettered initiative. Some 230 Soviet generals were executed, discharged or turned over by the soldiers to penalty battalions for errors in the course of the war (1941-1945).¹

The Russian was steadfast, indifferent to losses. Gen Balck commented on the "herd feeling" of the Soviet soldier which made his actions unpredictable. At one minute he fought desperately, not for life but to the death, and then easily could fall sway to panic and flee.² Sharp-wittedness was also a distinguishing trait. The Soviet soldier disdained equipment if makeshift materials were available....

The men of the Warsaw Pact armies are the heirs of those who conquered Eastern Europe in 1944-1945.³ The experience of combat skill is being handed on to the successors because the lessons of the war are important and timely today. During the war the Russians worked out combat training procedures in elaborating the questions of wave attacks. The use of these procedures was dictated by the low level of education and the lack of training time. Then they were followed out of habit.⁴ They were viewed as "ready-made" solutions for the problems of small subunit tactics. All of this in addition to the deep-rooted conservatism (of the Russians.—Editors) gives the NATO commanders the same advantages from the viewpoint of tactical leadership as the Wehrmacht commanders possessed. The Soviet battalion commanders were young, relatively inexperienced captains. In turn, they were subordinate to regimental staffs which were not sufficiently up to strength in order to control the combined-arms subunits.

Armed Services of the Soviet Army

The Soviet Tank Troops became a powerful combat arms at the end of the war. The Russians had mastered the technical procedures of combat. The techniques for setting up jamming in which the Germans had been strong now was turned against them. The tank offensive was made in waves. Now...there was an effective replacing of the armored units in the course of battle with new formations. They developed an echeloned system for breaching the defensive lines deep in the enemy defenses. During the period after 1942-1943, a mobile group which was the predecessor of the operational maneuver group (OMG) developed for exploiting the success of the breakthrough.⁵

During the war the might of Soviet artillery increased greatly. However, the German specialists criticized the Russians for the fact that they suffered from a lack of flexibility in the control of the latter. Artillery rarely succeeded in achieving a concentration of fire on the main axis. Intensity of fire (although high) was scattered along the front. But the artillery could set up corridors for attacking tanks and infantry.

Presently, 50 percent of the total training time in a Soviet academy is assigned to combined-arms training and only 10 percent for social disciplines. Regardless of this, shortcomings exist. There is a lack of combat training with the participation of large formations. Few nighttime exercises are conducted starting from the battalion and higher. Regimental exercises are rare. There are more battalion exercises than need be. Air support, as a rule, is routine. There are also problems in the leadership of the Air Forces. The problem remains of a choice between technical progress and the traditional, old methods. Wide-scale maneuvers for working out the questions of maneuvering the echelons on the front or army level are not conducted due to the absence of suitable ranges.⁶

Operational Level

The basic lesson which must be extracted from the experience of World War II is a study of the "enemy's" operational art. By 1943, the Soviet Army had highly trained commanders and a first-rate staff system.⁷ Flexibility was broadly practiced on the operational level: the army or the front. They (the Russians.—Editor) focused and are presently focusing all the strength of their talent on operational art. Commanders prefer not to be bothered with the questions of tactics. This is why, regardless of the successes in the war, the Wehrmacht lost it. Surprise and unpredictability were the two factors which determined the success of the Soviets.

The surprise of the counteroffensive in the winter of 1941-1942 and the commitment of reserves from Siberia dispelled the myth of the invincibility of the Wehrmacht. Subsequently each Russian counteroffensive achieved surprise, for example, the defeat of the 6th German

Army at Stalingrad, the counteroffensive at Kursk in July 1943 and the broad offensive as a result of which Army Group Center was eliminated in 1944. Nothing has changed at present. G. Dick has drawn attention to the fact that surprise and the well-honed techniques of disinformation which are employed by the Soviet Army can catch NATO by surprise.⁸ The unpredictability in manifesting the combat qualities of the Soviet Army as demonstrated in wartime should serve as a warning to the West. It must not be too complacent in assessing the fighting qualities of the Soviets. Regardless of the pathetic results of the Russo-Finnish Winter Campaign of 1940 and the defeats in encirclements in 1941-1942, the Soviet Army had defeated the Wehrmacht in 1945. The occupation of Czechoslovakia in 1968 was carried out in a few days. However, regardless of the unlimited military capabilities, the Russians have been unable to deal with the bands in Afghanistan for 6 years. (The article was published in 1968.—Editor.)

Consequences of the Changes Since 1945

It can be asserted that the situation of the Wehrmacht in the course of the war against Russia cannot be compared with a confrontation between NATO and the Warsaw Pact because there is a great difference in the size of the theater of operations and the effective strength of the defending armies. This difference is enormous. The NATO divisions have around 300 battle tanks while there were 25 tanks in the 11th Panzer Division of Gen Balck on the Chir River. In the Central European Theater, the Warsaw Pact infantry and the NATO infantry have been completely mechanized. The Wehrmacht was already disorganized when it attempted to defend the Eastern frontiers of the Reich. For this reason, that period during which the main military experience of the Soviets was acquired may be un instructive.

Combat Capability

Combat capability is a rather ill-defined factor but is no less important in determining the effective strength of the forces than is a precise estimating of tanks and guns. Motivation plays an important role in achieving effective combat capability. Will the NATO soldiers fight as well as the Wehrmacht soldiers did if they have better officers than the enemy?

It is quite probable that the Soviet Army has not undergone fundamental changes internally. The Soviet soldier has the reputation of a good soldier who is commanded without flexibility. For the first time since 1945, junior officers and NCOs are gaining real combat experience in Afghanistan.

Von Mellenthin christened the Red Army an "army without baggage." This meant that not only the number of rear vehicles was reduced to a minimum but also the very organization did not envisage peacetime "trinkets." Von Mellenthin gave an interesting example describing the Wehrmacht soldiers who assembled in the rear by the

field messes in search for comfort and friendship after catastrophic losses. The Soviet soldier did not do this. He did not have a psychological refuge in the rear. The inevitability of punishment or even the death sentence kept him on the forward edge.¹² G. Donnelly was struck by the decisive views of modern Soviet authors of military articles concerning the war's aims. Their viewpoint on this question has remained unchanged since 1945: "The basic aim of the war is the rapid and effective destruction of the enemy."¹³

What caused the German soldiers to continue fighting on the Soviet- German Front in the winter of 1943-1944, regardless of the enormous losses and the inevitability of defeat? Skillful command and organizational advantages would have been senseless if it were impossible to keep the soldiers in formation. What was the motivation of actions in this instance? Loyalty to the Fuhrer in Germany, faithfulness to service comrades and a desire to survive impelled them (the German soldiers.—Editors) to unprecedented self-sacrifice by modern standards. The war was waged with unprecedented ideological implacability by both sides. Propaganda, although not always effective, instilled hate and fear for the enemy. The hope of a "secret weapon" and leave temporarily raised the soldier's spirits. The system of decorations and commendations also provided much in this regard and there was a great gravitation toward this. If all of this did not work then there was the "draconian" system of military justice which forced obedience.

Problems of Motivation

The notion of "soldier's duty" probably is little applicable in terms of a modern recruit from the West. The Bundeswehr is terrorized by the atrocities of the Wehrmacht and will not apply its method however effective they may have been.¹⁴ The armies of the West would scarcely make those human sacrifices which the Wehrmacht permitted itself on the Soviet-German Front. It must be considered that NATO will rely on a new type of soldier who nevertheless must also prepare for all the eventualities of modern combat. He (the soldier.—Editor) is now an urban resident involved with equipment. However, the Wehrmacht soldiers and the kaiser's soldiers who were called up from the villages were more adapted to the hardships of field life. The successes of the Wehrmacht can also be explained by the close ties between the officers and junior officers and these were to last for the almost 6 years of total war. Such a phenomenon is possible only in wartime. The NATO military bloc must make up for its lag in the number of armed forces by the achievements of modern equipment.¹⁵ The crisis situations on the Soviet-German Front frequently were able to be resolved by employing in combat the "nonfighting personnel," that is, cooks, clerks and so forth. The rudiments of combat training are extremely essential for the personnel of the rear and administrative units and subunits because breakthroughs by enemy armored forces are simply inevitable. A new soldier after going through the young fighter's course must constantly

improve his battle skills in order to fight successfully in combined-arms battle. As a result, it is essential to find a correct assessment of that role which the rear and technical support will play both in peacetime and in combat so that the technical personnel will not feel that it has no involvement in the fighting being carried out by the infantry.

Space

The command of the NATO military bloc in our times does not have that space which was successfully employed by the Wehrmacht command for maneuvering on the Soviet-German Front. Von Manstein during the counterstrike at Kharkov in 1943 covered a distance equal to the distance from Frankfurt to Hannover. Is there no a compromise solution for maintaining the principle of *auftragstaktik* in order to solve this problem?

To the idea of surprise and unpredictability of enemy actions, Hitler countered with the concept of "fortified areas" (UR) and aimed at holding the key positions. It was essential to fight for them down to the last man and hold as much territory as was possible. However paradoxical as it might seem, according to the NATO concept of "forward lines" it is also essential to hold territories. One of the lessons which can be drawn from the doctrine of the UR is that the Germans at a price of low losses succeeded temporarily in holding up the advance of the enemy troops. But this delay did not make sense because the Wehrmacht could not count on essential help from outside. NATO can always count on such aid (from the United States and, possibly, from France). The doctrine was in vain also because on the general level attempts were not even made to involve the cities and build-up areas in the defensive system.

"All-Round Defense" of the Cities

If the built-up areas are more completely incorporated in the NATO doctrine of "forward lines," then in the event of a surprise enemy attack, its advance will be held up. The geographic position of Western Europe can be employed in eliminating the numerical superiority of the Soviet Armed Forces. Presently 9.4 percent of all the West German territory is built up with cities and 28.9 percent is covered by forests. Each year the open terrain suitable for conducting tank battles is being reduced as a result of increased forest plantings (1.8 percent) and the construction of roads (300 km²), industrial and residential developments.¹⁶ This is not the same terrain on which exercises are conducted in the combat training system by the armed forces of the Warsaw Pact states. If we consider the fact that combat effectiveness of the enemy declined in the past when it encountered unforeseen circumstances, this geographic advantage can be employed in the future.

In carrying out a surprise attack, the Warsaw Pact¹⁷ would thereby force the NATO bloc to conduct meeting engagements but NATO is prepared for this. However,

due to the scarcity of space, NATO would be unable to make full use of its superiority in subunit and unit tactics. But if the cities are turned into important defensive areas and in bypassing them by the enemy they are turned into centers of resistance, then in the event of a fighting retreat to the west, in maintaining here the mobile weapons, it would be possible to mobilize the front until the arrival of reinforcements. At the same time, the experience of the Wehrmacht indicates that the losses were too great for rapidly replenishing. Irregular troops or armored formations could defend the cities. Specially trained units of territorial forces and light infantry could use the tactical advantages of the defense of cities. In taking into account the low costs of combat effectiveness, these units will be capable of fighting if they have a hope of help.

Proceeding from the war's experience, it can be concluded that the Warsaw Pact will give great importance to the cities, even to the detriment of the success of the operations. The enormous forces thrown into Stalingrad in 1943 could have been reduced and shifted to the Caucasus in order to thereby tie down the entire enemy army group. When the fate of the Wehrmacht had already been decided, no one thought of using the troops defending Berlin in another place in order to alter the developing situation. In a future war, politicians will give greater importance to the capture or loss of cities than territory.

Even the passive resistance of any city is more preferable than a lack of defense (an "open city"). It took 100,000 soldiers and 2,000 tanks to restore order in Prague in 1968.¹⁸ In all conflicts, beginning with 1945, small cities could remain independent ("open") regardless of their cultural or religious significance. Jerusalem in 1967 was a classic example confirming this idea.

The notion of an "all-round" defense for cities has provided an impetus for further research. In actuality, cities are an obstacle which are not taken into account out of ethical considerations. In order to defend the forward lines, NATO here must make a compromise in order to compensate for the territorial expanse which NATO does not have. In realistic terms these geographic features can give advantages to NATO which at one time were given to the Wehrmacht by the enormous territorial expanses in Russia.

The Wehrmacht's operations on the Soviet-German Front (1943-1945) provide a number of lessons which are pertinent under the conditions of the acquiring of daily experience by NATO and the Warsaw Pact countries. The German Army on the Soviet-German Front showed that combined-arms regroupings carried out quickly and flexibly on a tactical level can nullify the numerical superiority of the enemy. The Germans completely subordinated their organization and structure to operational requirements. It is difficult to achieve this in peacetime, although the Warsaw Pact has no such problems. The Wehrmacht operated successfully because it

knew its enemy and employed tactics in accord with this knowledge. But what did the Wehrmacht ignore? This is the most important lesson which must be learned. Any skillful tactics employed within an incorrect operational plan will lead us to defeat. Fortunately, the experience of the Soviet troops in defeating the Reich does not have any analogs in the current balance of forces of NATO and the Warsaw Pact. There is an enormous difference in the territorial expanse and strength of the defending armies. The territorial expanse combined with the tactical skills worked in favor of the Wehrmacht in fighting the Russians. Tactical innovations are possible today if a successful plan is elaborated for thwarting a surprise attack.

Here a compromise has been proposed within the doctrine of "forward lines." However, a compromise plan leads to compromise results. In order to achieve a decisive success, that is, to destroy and not block the first waves of the Warsaw Pact troops, as experience has shown, one may need to go farther than would be politically acceptable. And the last lesson which must be learned is the risk factor which is often forgotten in peacetime. In repeating von Mellenthin, it can be said that strong nerves are required for achieving decisive results. We must not rely completely on tactics and technology. "There is no room...for a school of 'cautious' generals in our age of gasoline engines and airplanes."¹⁹

Footnotes

1. INTERNATIONAL DEFENSE REVIEW, No 12, 1981, p 1596.
2. "General Balck," January, 1979, p 26.
3. By the spring of 1945, due to the stubborn fighting of the Soviet Union and its valorous Armed Forces, the peoples of Poland, Romania, Bulgaria, Yugoslavia, Hungary and Finland as well as a significant portion of the peoples of Czechoslovakia, Austria and Norway had been freed from Nazi enslavement and had acquired national independence and political freedom (see: "Osvoboditelnaya missiya Sovetskikh Vooruzhennykh Sil vo vtoroy mirovoy voyne" [The Liberating Mission of the Soviet Armed Forces in World War II], Moscow, Politizdat, 2d Edition, 1976, p 361).—Editors.
4. G.J. Dick, "Soviet Battle Drills," INTERNATIONAL DEFENSE REVIEW, No 5, 1985, p 663.
5. G. Donnelly, "The Soviet Operational Maneuver Group," INTERNATIONAL DEFENSE REVIEW, No 9, 1982, p 1177.
6. "Gefecht der Verbundenen Waffen Ost/West," lecture by OTL I.G. Rump, KOMMANDEURSTAGUNG DER BUNDESWEHR, 22 April 1986.
7. Lucas, pp 53-59.
8. "Catching NATO Unawares. Soviet Army Surprise and Deception Techniques," INTERNATIONAL DEFENSE REVIEW, No 1, 1986.
9. [Not in text]
10. [Not in text]
11. [Not in text]
12. "Panzer Battles," pp 303-304.
13. G. Donnelly, DEFENSE REVIEW, No 12, 1981, p 1586.
14. The entire system for the combat and ideological training of the personnel shows that the Bundeswehr more and more is becoming a weapon in the hands of the extreme rightist forces and more and more openly is approaching the Nazi Wehrmacht (see: "Bundesver—armiya revansha" [The Bundeswehr—An Army of Revenge], Moscow, Voenizdat, 1969, p 10).—Editors.
15. Here we can see the desire of the author to depict the currently existing approximate military equilibrium as some "lag" on the part of the United States and NATO in the military area behind the USSR and the other Warsaw Pact countries and thereby achieve from the Western public a meek agreement to increasing defense budgets for a further arms race, primarily nuclear (see: "Otkuda iskhodit ugroza miru" [From Whence Comes the Threat to Peace], Moscow, Voenizdat, Izd-vo APN, 4th Edition, 1987, p 15).—Editor.
16. "Das Gefecht der Kampftruppen in Beibouten Gelände," Para 104, taken from "Statistischen Jahrbuch der Bundesrepublik."
17. The military doctrine of the Warsaw Pact, like each of its members, is subordinate to the task of preventing war—both nuclear and conventional. Because of the very nature of the socialist social system, these states have not linked and do not link their future to a military solution of international problems. They are in favor of resolving all disputed international questions solely by peaceful means, by political means (see: PRAVDA, 30 May 1987).—Editors.
18. In Czechoslovakia in August 1968, a real threat arose to the victories of socialism and a direct danger of a counterrevolutionary coup.... Under these conditions, the entry of allied troops into Prague on 21 August 1968 was an essential and the solely correct decision (see: V. Beyda, "Politika i ideologiya" [Politics and Ideology], Moscow, Progress, 1979, pp 14-15).—Editor.
19. "Panzer Battles," p 254.

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00010004k Moscow VOYENNO-ISTORICHESKIY
ZHURNAL in Russian No 11, Nov 88 (signed to press
26 Oct 88) pp 78-85

[Article, published under the heading "Scientific Papers and Information," by Col A.S. Yakushevskiy, candidate of historical sciences: "Military History in the United States"]

[Text] At present, among the U.S. population and particularly the student youth, there has been an increased interest in military history. The INTERNATIONAL HERALD TRIBUNE termed this phenomenon "a rise in an intellectual fashion for military history" and "an explosion of interest in historical and military aspects of politics." The newspaper also announced that over the last 10 years in the American universities and colleges the number of specialists in this area has increased by 3-fold.¹ While during the Vietnamese War a course on military history was given in only a few-score American universities and colleges, in the mid-1980s this has been introduced at more than 400 institutions of learning.

American students have shown a great interest in attending lectures and seminars on military history. Thus, at Princeton University 50 people enrolled for a seminar on the problems of the Vietnamese War and they had been planning for 25. There would have been even more but the history chair, due to the limited capabilities of the faculty, halted the enrollment. In the autumn of 1985, many students attended a lecture series on military history which was broadcast over the New Haven radio station. These were prepared and given by instructors at Yale University. The subject matter was very diverse: from the "Grand Strategy of the Roman Empire" to "The Lessons of World War II." Due to the interest shown in the radio lectures, their transmission was continued. Other radios have joined in the broadcasting of the new series.²

Instructors and graduate students in the institutions of higher learning have become more actively involved with military history. The number of doctoral dissertations defended each year in the United States on this specialty has increased from approximately 100 (in the mid-1970s) to 300 (the mid-1980s) and is presently over 10 percent of all the dissertations on historical subjects.³

American school children are also showing enormous interest in the study of military history. For example, they are not satisfied by those few pages in the textbooks which are devoted to the war in Vietnam. They want to know significantly more about it. For this purpose, the schools are organizing special lectures and war veterans are being invited as speakers. Many school teachers are selecting materials on the history of the Vietnamese War from periodicals and books and then using them for conducting additional exercises with their students. In the spring of 1987, in the senior grades of 273 schools of the 46 U.S. states, elective study courses have been

organized as an experiment on the subject "The Lessons of the War in Vietnam." In a number of American schools, upon the initiative of the history teachers, they are collecting commemorative articles related to the War in Vietnam, including examples of weapons, supplies and uniforms, diaries of the war participants, antiwar posters and so forth. These articles are then used as visual aids in the history exercises.⁴

Americans have shown a great interest in the new journals on military history such as: ARMY HISTORIAN, AEROSPACE HISTORIAN, JOURNAL OF THE AMERICAN AVIATION HISTORICAL SOCIETY, HISTORY OF THE CIVIL WAR, MINERVA and others. Readers have also been attracted to the journal NAVAL HISTORY which has been published since April 1988 and is devoted to naval history.⁵ In endeavoring to satisfy reader demand, the civilian and particularly the military publications are beginning to devote more space on their pages to military history.

The United States published many books on military history subjects. They are all quickly sold out. For example, they are continuing to publish the works from the multi-volume series "The U.S. Army in World War II." Books are being published in mass editions on the local wars and military conflicts which have occurred since 1945, primarily the Vietnamese War. While in 1980, American bookstores could offer a purchaser 2 or 3 books on the Vietnamese War, 5 years later the number was already 15-20 and they were all in demand. Publications on library bookshelves also did not sit idle. "Ten years ago," stated Richard Cane, the commercial director of Presidio Press located in the California town of Novato and specializing in the publishing of military history literature, "we could not find stores which would agree to sell books about Vietnam and now they themselves are phoning us requesting such books."⁶ Over the entire period from 1960 through 1979, the United States published less than 20 books on investigating the Vietnamese War and now their number has exceeded 300 titles. In addition to the 15-volume series of work on this subject published in the first half of the 1970s, the Military History Center of the U.S. Army began in 1983 to publish a new series of books on this war under the heading "The Army of the United States in Vietnam" and aimed at a broader range of readers. A series of works on the involvement of the American Armed Forces in military operations in Indochina is also being published by the military history services of the U.S. Air Forces, Navy and Marines. Time-Life publishers have announced the putting out of a subscription series of 30 books on the war in Vietnam. More than 500,000 Americans have already signed up for them.⁷

The increased interest shown by the U.S. public in military history has caused Valor Publishing (Allentown, Pennsylvania) to begin publishing a series of popular, beautifully illustrated books under the title "Who Fought in World War II." These describe in detail the troop groupings, the history of the units and formations,

their organization and disposition, a description of the officer personnel is given and so forth. Readers have already been offered over 2-score books from this series. These include: "The U.S. Army Grouping in Europe," "German Ground Troops and Their Officer Corps," "Armed Forces of Japan: Grouping," "The U.S. Army Grouping in the Pacific" and others.⁸

Along with the films, military history films recorded on video tape have also become widespread in the United States. The Americans, for example, may watch a 110-minute video film "Victory in Europe" narrating the actions of the Anglo-American troops in Western Europe after the Normandy Landing, a video film "Vietnam in the Year of the Pig" describing the U.S. troop operations against the Vietnamese people and the video films "Anchors Away" and "Heritage of Glory" which extol the U.S. Navy and Marines as well as many other such recordings.⁹

Significantly more attention has begun to be given to various significant dates in U.S. military history. For example, the 350th anniversary of the founding of the U.S. National Guard (12 December 1986) was celebrated by the publishing of a special postcard. At the end of 1986, in Fort Bliss, Texas, over the period of a week they celebrated the 140th anniversary of the 3d Armored Cavalry Regiment. Invited as honored guests to the celebrations were all of the still surviving former commanders of the regiment as well as other veterans. At the request of the regiment, a well-known artist has drawn a large picture depicting the actions of the forward detachment of the 3d Armored Regiment at the beginning of 1945 on German territory after the American troops had crossed the Saar River. For a comparatively small price, each veteran and serviceman of the regiment can obtain a copy of it.¹⁰

The press recently has begun to urge the federal and local authorities to restore the ideological and indoctrinational importance of American military history monuments. This has been caused by the fact that due to the desire of businessmen to gain as much possible profit from the public, the national parks and memorials existing in the United States and related to individual wars and engagements have been turned into amusement areas and have largely lost their indoctrinational importance. A large number of motels, hotels, parking areas, restaurants, stores and other commercial enterprises has been built on their territory. Simply no room has remained for the military history monuments and structures. Such a picture is observed, for example, at the Virginia Commemorative Battlefield not far from Washington. American journalists feel that if it continues this way, after several years, a similar fate will befall the Gettysburg National Military Park, the National Battlefield at Manassas and many other memorials. The journal *ARMY* has urged the federal authorities to appoint as the leaders of such memorials persons who would be aware of the indoctrinational role of military history monuments and would prevent the turning of them into commercial enterprises.¹¹

One other evidence of the growing interest of Americans in military history is the revitalization in recent years of various military history social organizations. Presently, there is more than a score of them in the United States. These include: the American Air Force Fund, the Council on the Military Past of America, the Society of Military Historians, the Naval Historical Fund, the American Aviation Historical Society and others. These are based on volunteer principles. Each of the organizations has its own publication and annually conducts congresses or meetings.¹²

American academic circles see the reasons for the increased interest in the United States in military history in the policy of the Reagan Administration and its course of building up military strength. The professor at Chicago University, W. McNeil, stated to a representative of the newspaper *INTERNATIONAL HERALD TRIBUNE* that "the awakening of interest in military history" which can be presently observed in the United States is linked to the "militarization of American society." The American Prof P. Kennedy who was invited to America to give a course on military history at Yale University has pointed out that in the United States many scientists have appeared who view "military operations as a potential reasonable means for achieving national interest" and that the "growing role" of military history is a consequence of the "growing role" of military strength.¹³

In the research chief attention has been given to the ever-growing link of military problems with politics, ideology, economics, moral-psychological and demographic factors, and to various manifestations of social life. Many works are devoted not to troop operations on the battlefield but rather to their logistic support, to the functioning of the military economy, to the effect of a war and preparations for it on the nation's productive forces, on the migration of the population, racial relations, public education, and the organizing of instruction in the civilian institutions of higher learning. Characteristic in this regard was the book by G. Nash "The American West Transformed: The Impact of the Second World War" and published in 1985 by Indiana University Press.¹⁴ On the basis of rich factual material, it points out what an influence World War II had on the development of the economy and science in the western American states. The author emphasizes that precisely from this period began the turning of California into the main aviation and then missile-space center.

The new trends have been reflected not only in the content of the military history literature being published but also in the subjects of the scientific conferences and symposiums being held. For example, in June 1986, at the West Point Military Academy, a scientific conference was held devoted to the influence of the Vietnamese War on the economic development of the Southeast Asian countries. All the speakers at the conference described the "economic upswing" which was supposedly caused in the East Asian area by the years-long U.S.

aggression against the Vietnamese people. It was emphasized primarily that the Vietnamese War was, supposedly, an "enormous incentive" for the economic development of Japan, South Korea, Taiwan, Hong Kong and the ASEAN nations. It, in the words of the speakers, also helped to increase the U.S. foreign trade turnover with the ASEAN countries from \$100 million at the beginning of the 1960s to \$700 million in 1977. With the aid of such arguments, American researchers have endeavored to present the aggression by their country which cost the Vietnamese people 7 million lives¹⁵ as some noble and very beneficial act.

The tendency to justify American aggression in Vietnam can be traced also in a majority of the research and current affairs works published in the United States recently. The authors of these works use primarily the standard anticommunist and anti-Soviet fabrications on the "export of revolution," "communist expansion" and so forth. Thus, the American Gen B. Palmer, who in the mid-1960s was the former deputy commander of the U.S. Armed Forces in Vietnam and after retirement has become a military historian, in his book "The 25-Year War: America's Military Role in Vietnam" published in 1984 has asserted that Vietnam itself was of "secondary importance" for the United States but there was, supposedly, a "clear threat" from communism. For precisely this reason, Palmer states, for Washington it was very important to "counter this threat," "to contain the penetration of communism" into South Vietnam and thereby "secure" the U.S. allies in Asia and Oceania, particularly those such as Japan, South Korea and Taiwan. "If the United States had not fought on the side of South Vietnam," he writes, "then the position of these Pacific allies of America would have been seriously undermined. Palmer considers as a positive result for the United States the fact that after the Vietnamese War, China came to hold an "anti-Vietnamese position" which has led, in his words, to "a weakening of the influence of communism in Asia."¹⁶

In an interview with the newspaper ARMY TIMES in September 1986, an associate of Morrow Publishers emphasized that the main goal of the books presently being published in the United States on the Vietnamese War was to show it as noble and demonstrate that the Americans were fighting in Vietnam "for a just cause." This also is the goal primarily of the works on the history of the Vietnamese War by representatives of the so-called revisionist school. One of them, T. Lomperis, the author of the book "The War Everyone Lost and Won," considers as a major accomplishment of the United States the fact that intervention in the civil war in Vietnam made it possible to prevent the spread of communism to other parts of the world and undermined the peoples' belief in the idea of "continuous revolution." He concluded that regardless of the loss of South Vietnam, American actions in Indochina were a "complete triumph" and marked a "military success."¹⁷

In many of the recent works on the Vietnamese War, one can trace the actions of individual American servicemen,

subunits, units and formations, as well as the combat arms and armed services. Thus, R. Armitage in the article "Vietnam Retrospective" quotes the words of President R. Reagan who in May 1984 called the American participants in the aggression against Vietnam "just as much heroes as all of those who ever fought for a noble cause." In following the president, the author of the article sings praises to all of those who, in carrying out the orders of Washington, mercilessly exterminated the Vietnamese patriots. Praise for the marines rings in the books prepared by the U.S. Marines History and Museum Agency. These include: a collection of articles "The U.S. Marines in Vietnam in 1954-1973," the work by Maj G. Telfer "U.S. Marines in Vietnam," "Fighting the North Vietnamese in 1967" and others.¹⁸ American aviation is praised in the book "The United States Air Force in Southeast Asia, 1961-1973" and edited by S. Verger in 1984. S. Stanson in the book "Green Berets at War, 1956-1975" describes with admiration the activities of the U.S. Army Special Forces in Vietnam, he emphasizes their "high military skill" and points out under what supposedly "very difficult conditions" they had to fight when they trained the Saigon puppet troops in "counterinsurgency warfare methods" or were sent to the hill country of South Vietnam in order by deception to recruit supporters from among the national minorities.¹⁹

In 1985, the New York Crown Publishers published a book on those American servicemen who for participation in the Vietnamese War had been awarded the highest decoration of the United States, the Medal of Honor. This extols the "feats" and "valor" of the persons who fought against the freedom-loving people of Vietnam and recommends that we follow their example of "loyalty to American ideals."²⁰

Not all Americans share the views of those authors who endeavor in every possible way to "ennoble" American participation in the Vietnamese War. Both among the researchers as well as among the readers there are also those who continue to condemn U.S. military intervention into the internal affairs of Vietnam, and they consider that the Vietnamese War did "great moral harm" to the American people. In a letter to the magazine U.S. NEWS AND WORLD REPORT, Mrs. K. Smith from Missouri whose son fought in Vietnam called the Vietnamese War a "hell." She condemned the U.S. leaders for participation in the war and felt that the complete truth about it has not yet been told. "God forgive those," she ends her letter, "who so callously decided to participate in it sacrificing our children for nothing."²¹

The Pentagon has endeavored to use the increased interest in the United States in military history for raising the professional level of American servicemen. In an interview with the ARMED FORCES JOURNAL in 1986, Gen W. Richardson who headed the Command of Scholarly and Scientific Research on the Organizational Development of the Ground Forces, in speaking on the

tasks of combat training in the U.S. Army, declared: "It is all the more important that our officers as well as the NCOs study military history, understand it, and perceive it from the viewpoint of their profession."²²

Military history, in the opinion of the Pentagon leaders, helps to develop the creative thinking in the servicemen, it instills in the American people confidence in the necessity and importance of military strength for the United States at the present stage of its development. Upon the initiative of the U.S. Defense Department, recently a military history course has been introduced in the curricula of all higher military schools and courses for the combat arms and services for advanced training and retraining of the officer and NCO personnel of the U.S. Armed Forces. The American military schools have established a number of new military history chairs and the existing ones have been enlarged. Civilian professional historians have begun to be more widely involved in teaching military history to servicemen, particularly from among the National Guard and the U.S. Armed Forces Reserves.

The need to intensely study military history is justified by the fear of the supposed "Soviet military threat." From it, asserts the U.S. Air Force Maj E. Tilford, how American officers meet this threat will their professional suitability be judged. The Soviet Union, in the opinion of this officer, surpasses the United States in terms of the number of armed forces and the quantity of military equipment and for this reason in order to achieve success in a clash with such an enemy it is essential to fight "more artfully than it." One of the most important ways for achieving "intellectual superiority" over the Soviet Union in the military area is considered by Tilford to be the study of military history. "For a mastery of military skill it is essential first of all to master history," he writes. "The principles of our profession are based not on equipment or technology. Our past is the basic factor which determines how we perceive ourselves...." He emphasizes that in Korea and Vietnam, Americans had a "very great technical superiority" and regardless of this, suffered a defeat. "If we ever act against the Soviets," Tilford concludes, "we should have a better mastery of military art, otherwise history will be on their side."²³

The Pentagon leadership has recommended that all the U.S. career servicemen study military history independently. For this purpose the defense departments, the staffs of the armed services, the joint and special commands as well as the military history centers annually publish special lists of recommended literature while prominent U.S. military leaders, including the secretaries and the chiefs of staff of the armed services provide consultative exercises with the officers. Recently, the command of the U.S. Armed Forces has given great attention to improving the methods by which the servicemen study military history. For example, the military press has widely discussed the collective trip on 1 May 1986 by all the generals and colonels from the Command for the Scholarly and Scientific Study of the

Organizational Development of the Ground Forces headed by the commander, Gen W. Richardson from Washington to the Gettysburg Area, where in July 1983 there was one of the major engagements of the U.S. Civil War. In speaking with correspondents at Gettysburg, Gen Richardson emphasized that such trips provide an opportunity to study military history not in an auditorium but rather on the battlefield, to become familiar with the defense works, types of weapons, and imagine clearly the events of the past. The leadership of the U.S. Army, he said, intends to extend this method of teaching officer and NCO personnel to all the American Armed Forces and for this purpose to prepare special instructions for the staffs on the organizing of collective trips by servicemen to the sites of former battles. Richardson's deputy, Lt Gen R. Forman, pointed out the link of military history with modern times. "The battle held 120 years ago at Gettysburg," he said, "also has bearing on the current air-land operation (engagement), as it affirms all the principles of war. It forces us to give some thought to the factors of time and locality, on the need for reconnaissance and precise command and control. Today we will not fight as then, but Gettysburg forces us to think creatively."²⁴

The improving of the methods and forms of teaching military history to American servicemen was the subject of the article "Military History Should Stir and Force the Students to Raise Questions" published in the journal ARMY. This emphasized that "the revitalization presently observed in the U.S. Army in the study of military history is an encouraging indication" and that the army schools and courses have begun "to show a new approach to assessing military history as an important means for developing the intellectual capabilities of the officers."²⁵ At the same time, a number of shortcomings was pointed out in the teaching of military history: excessive academicness, and instruction basically using examples of the successful actions of the U.S. Armed Forces in various wars. In this context it was pointed out that the well-known German military theorists Scharnhorst and Clausewitz write their popular works chiefly on the basis of studying the reasons for the defeat of Napoleon in 1812 and the failures of troops in other engagements. According to the assertion of the journal, an American officer "should always doubt the concepts and ideas of his army, even if he loyally tries to carry them out." For precisely this reason, the article emphasizes, for instruction the most edifying are not those operations, engagements and battles which conform most to the recent American concept but rather those which force American officers "to think deeply over the wisdom of the presently adopted concepts." The publication proposes significant changes in the military history curriculum for the U.S. military schools in order to eliminate the still existing tendentiousness in them and provide a greater opportunity for studying the events of the past, when the troops had to fight under difficult conditions and the servicemen had to show a maximum of tenacity, ability and self-sacrifice, even though they were not always successful in this.²⁶

The journal ARMY has recommended giving up the pedanticness and impartiality in the teaching of military history in order not to extinguish the students' interest in the studied subject. The first task of the teacher is to arouse the interest of his students, the article states. For this reason there have been proposals to create a more vivid picture of previous wars, operations and engagements, to take up the uniqueness of the situation arising in the course of them, the particular features in the conduct and the characters of the fighting men, to isolate the most important as well as provide profound, sound conclusions. An officer who has mastered the basic ideas but who, possibly, does not have any notion of certain details, the journal emphasizes, will be more useful than the one who knows all the minor facts brilliantly but is unable to link the experience of the past with the present. The journal argues for a creative approach to studying military theory by American servicemen.²⁷

Analogous ideas are put forward by the U.S. Air Force journal AIR UNIVERSITY REVIEW. In modern warfare, with its technically complex and advanced weapons, its authors assert, the crucial role will be played not only by weapons but by the ability to use them correctly. For this reason in order to improve the intellectual potential of American troops and primarily their personnel, particularly the commanders, they feel, a study of military history and extracting correct lessons from the past are of primary importance.²⁸

On the pages of the journal ARMY, U.S. Army Lt Col M. Sais describes how military history is being used to improve the professional level of American officers. In the I Army Corps, where he served, scientific-practical conferences were regularly held for all the officers on operations analysis and planning, each of which lasted 1-3 days. Their work was organized on the basis of studying and generalizing the historical experience of previous wars and military conflicts. For example, at one of these they heard scientific papers on actions during the period of the Korean War by the X American Corps in the course of the Inchon Landing Operation and in the taking of Seoul, on the experience of the I U.S. Army Corps in its landing on the northern coast of Luzon Island in 1945, as well as on the joint actions of the 7th Infantry Division and the units of the American Navy and Air Force in the fighting for the Aleutian Islands during the years of World War II. The participants of another conference analyzed in detail the actions of American troops in the course of the Grenada Landing in 1983. Along with officers from the I Corps invited to the conference were prominent military historians as well as participants of the designated events. Thus, the retired Adm J. Russell who participated in World War II in the Pacific told about the actions of patrol aviation during the fighting for the Aleutian Islands. The Deputy Chief of the Agency to Study the Soviet Army at the Combined-Arms Center of the U.S. Armed Forces, Col D. Glantz, a well-known specialist in the United States on the Soviet-German Front, gave a lecture on the Vistula-Oder Operation. Representatives of the Israeli

and Egyptian Armies were also invited to speak. The journal ARMY considers the experience of the officers from the I Corps as instructive for all the U.S. Armed Forces.²⁹

Knowledge on military history is being disseminated in the United States not only among the servicemen. In order to attract civilian youth to studying this discipline, the U.S. military departments annually allocate funds for a prize for the researchers. Thus, in 1986, under the Center for Historical Research of the U.S. Air Force (Maxwell Air Base), several such prizes were given out in an amount of \$2,500 for preparing research on the history of the Air Force, the development of its tactics and strategy, the organization of logistic support, the evolution of air force equipment and weaponry. Similar prizes have been established under the U.S. Army Military History Institute (Carlays Barracks).³⁰

In the aim of popularizing military history among the public and attracting new researchers to it, the U.S. military history services as well as certain military history chairs, libraries and archives constantly publish indexes of the documents and materials stored in the U.S. National Archives, the memorial libraries, the military history centers of the Armed Services and other repositories.

The interest presently observed in the United States for military history is a component part of the overall neoconservative course aimed at the ever-wider use of violence in the interests of Washington foreign policy. Military history in the United States to an ever-greater degree is being put into the service of the strategic interests of American imperialism and is being employed to strengthen the military might of the United States and for raising the professional level of American servicemen.

Footnotes

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6. ARMY TIMES, 29 September 1986, pp 41, 44.
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9. ARMOR, January-February 1987, p 49.

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11. ARMY, December 1987, p 15.
12. MILITARY AFFAIRS, January 1986, p 65.
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28. AIR UNIVERSITY REVIEW, September-October 1986, pp 104- 107.

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'Obey The Wise...'

000100041 Moscow VOYENNO-ISTORICHESKIY
ZHURNAL in Russian No 11, Nov 88 (signed to press
26 Oct 88) pp 84-89

[Article by Yu.F. Sokolov, candidate of historical sciences: "Obey the Wise..." (On Troop Discipline in Ancient Russia)]

[Text] The principles of troop discipline in Ancient Russia were established during the period of the communal-tribal system. When confronted with the threat of a military attack or in going on campaign, the people's "veche" [assembly] was called and here they established the number of troops and routes of their movement and a military leader was chosen. During the campaign or on the eve of the battle, the military leader convened a military council from the representatives of the retinue and people's militia. The decision of the veche should be carried out unswervingly by all men without exception. To stand to the death for a brother and father, for the fatherland, was an unwritten rule. The Russian warrior was ready for self-sacrifice and to give a helping hand and he considered being captured to be an infamy for himself. Steadfastness and decisiveness were his main fighting qualities. These traits were manifested most vividly in the war (968- 971) of the Russians and Bulgars against the aggressive Byzantine Empire in which there existed Ancient Roman discipline with its harsh system of punishments (even for the loss of his shield a warrior was maimed with his nose being cut off).

For over 2 months the Byzantine Army had besieged Dorostol Fortress where a portion of the Russo-Bulgar troops was under the leadership of the Kievan Prince Svyatoslav. The Greek fleet was blockading the fortress. Difficulties had arisen in the garrison over food and the ranks of the defenders were being thinned by sickness and wounds. Following the old custom, Svyatoslav on 21 July 971 assembled his military council in order to determine what to do next: to give decisive battle, to begin peace talks or to make their way on boats down the Danube to the Black Sea. The final word remained with the military leader and Svyatoslav said: "Let us not defame the land of Russia, but our bones will rest here, for the dead do not accept disgrace."¹ The Russian warriors replied: "Where you lay your head, there we will lay ours."²

An acute feeling of military honor and duty and responsibility to one's people united the soldiers. This was the ancient form of the oath-vow on the eve of a battle and

which broke out on the following day. Overwhelmed in quantitative terms, but united by the voluntary vow, the Russian warriors did not flinch and emerged with honor from the battle. The Kievan Prince concluded an honorable truce with the Byzantine Emperor.

In the early feudal state, the joint decision of the soldiers and the military leader was the guarantee of discipline in battle. In addition to the verbal oath (in the ancient Russian laws, the "company"), there were also the oaths: on weapons (sword), to the gods of the pagan pantheon (to Perun, Veles and others) and with the adoption of Christianity (988) also the kissing of the cross. A word of honor was highly regarded in Ancient Russia. A violating of this and "they were driven right out of the land," that is, they were expelled from the territory of the community or tribe.³

During the age of feudal isolation, the prince's retinue assumed independent significance. This was recruited, as a rule, from all free persons wishing to serve. The members of the retinue had a sword and a spear both mounted and on foot, they strictly observed the oath of loyalty to the prince, who, in turn, consulted with his senior retinue members ("thinking boyars"). The code of feudal honor condemned treason, those who deserted or left the battlefield were kept in "need," and could be condemned up to the death sentence. The most terrible punishment for all as before was expulsion from the homeland and death abroad. "It is better for your bones to lie in your own land than to be glorious abroad," stated the folk wisdom.

Regardless of the strengthening of the power of the princes, the people's *veche* did not lose its importance. It assembled in exceptional instances when it was a question of defending the territory against foreign invasion. Thus, in 968, when Prince Svyatoslav was on campaign, the Pechengs besieged Kiev. The city dwellers assembled the *veche*, they armed themselves and drove the Steppe peoples from the city walls.

After the death of Yaroslav Vladimirovich the Wise in 1054, the unified Ancient Russian state formally split into a number of independent principalities which had their own administration and troops. In 1055, the Russian people again had to defend the integrity of their lands. Hordes of nomadic Polovitsians had approached the frontiers of Russia. The fight against them required a unity of actions by all Russian princes. Vladimir Monomakh (1053-1125), in acting against the Steppe peoples, urged the Russian princes to unite for joint actions. In preparing for the campaigns, he gave great attention to drawing up plans, organizing reconnaissance and disciplining the troops. In uniting the efforts of the principalities, Monomakh involved in the campaigns not only the princes' retinue but also broad strata of the population including militias from the city dwellers and peasants. The results of the campaigns of the Russian troops against the Polovitsians (1103, 1107 and 1111) were impressive. A portion of the hordes was pushed back to

the Northern Caucasus. "The victories of Vladimir Monomakh over the Polovitsians ensured the security of Russia for several decades."⁴

In military and state activities, Vladimir Monomakh widely used the support of the masses of people. Representatives of the working population participated in the military councils. The interests of the simple people were taken into account in the decisions. This provided a unity of action by the princely retinue and people's militia and ensured discipline in combat.

Vladimir Monomakh proved himself to be not only a talented military leader but also a thinker. Of enormous interest are his "Precepts" [*poucheniya*] in which an attempt was made to extensively generalize military experience of those times and raised the questions of troop indoctrination. In this work Monomakh drew in the image of a warrior firm in spirit, hard of body and possessing high moral qualities. While in the nations of Western Europe, military skill of the knights was honed in jousting, the Russian retinue members considered the hunting of wild beast to be the main training for fighting. For the Russian soldier, particularly the militia member, military affairs were only an enforced undertaking and not a profession. Fighting for a just cause, for the homeland, in contrast to the prestige jousting tournaments and rapacious campaigns which so consumed the minds of the Medieval Knights in the West, was a testing of the physical and moral qualities of the warrior.

In the "Precepts" a great deal of space is given to organizing the troops, to the discipline of the troops and military leaders. In analyzing the lamentable experience of the unsuccessful princes, Monomakh pointed out: "In going to war, do not shirk, do not rely on the leader: neither drink nor food will you find, neither sleep; set your own pickets and at night, having placed men on all sides, lie down to rest and get up early; do not be in a rush to take off your weapons, without having taken a look around, for because of laziness a man can be suddenly killed."⁵ The military leader demanded from the captains [*voyevods*] that they personally organize everything and check everything in battle, that they always and everywhere be combat ready, show vigilance and set an example of discipline. If Monomakh demanded that a commander be able to organize a victory, then from the junior soldiers he demanded discipline and the uncompromising execution of orders: "...In the presence of seniors be quiet, obey the wise, obey the senior, and remain on good terms with your equals and juniors."⁶

Vladimir Monomakh believed that it was not fear of punishment which caused a soldier to obey the commander but rather the high concept of honor. The military leader should be an example for one's troops, demanding obedience and he should also look after their needs.

Regardless of the feudal disorganization and the respective isolating of the military forces, in the 12th Century (1132) in the troop formations of the Russian principalities organizational and disciplinary relations continued to exist and these were characteristic of a unified Ancient Russian state. As before, the prince was the head of the troops and his retinue the core. The town and peasant militias were of great importance. As before, the prince took a decision together with the captains, the representatives of the retinue and militia at the military council. The defense of the principality by the simple people was identified with the defense of all Russia. For this reason most often one heard the challenge: "Brothers, to my dear Russia! Fight with a single heart."⁷ Such an appeal showed that all the soldiers recognized themselves to be brothers and according to the Ancient Russian laws promised to support one another in battle.

The succession of military traditions in Russia was apparent in many engagements. The Russian soldiers excelled in discipline and self-sacrifice in battle and a disdain for cowards. The Polish, Hungarian and German military leaders particularly valued the "Russian warrior" for the habit of "following their fathers."⁸ The expression "honor for the father and for the son" is a saying as well as a description of the relations which developed in Russia. Public opinion condemned the violating of one's word, the nonexecution of military duty and showed particular implacability for betrayal of the fatherland. The concept of honor was the foundation of discipline. Among the Russian warriors there was a highly developed feeling of comradeship and it was difficult to fight if one could not count on one's brother in arms. An understanding of this was part of the flesh and blood of each warrior—from the prince to the simple militia member.

In 1185, the retinue of the northern princes under the leadership of Prince Igor Svyatoslavich determined to carry out a campaign against the Polovitsians, having not informed the other Russian princes of this. The idea of the campaign was not thought out and there were few troops, regardless of the use of the militia. The retinue members were surrounded by superior enemy forces and were in an extremely difficult situation. At the military council, the princes decided to break out to the Severskiy Donets and then reach the Russian lands. Here it was agreed that everyone, including the princes, would dismount. In addressing the troops, Prince Igor said: "Brothers and retinue, it is better to fight than to give up."⁹ The Russian force, defending itself, moved toward the Kayala River where on 12 May 1185 a battle occurred. A detachment of Chernigov "kovuys" (settled nomads who were part of the Russian troops) did not hold out and fled. Wounded Prince Igor on a mount took out after them trying to halt them. He became separated from his troops, he was surrounded by Polovitsians and captured. The Russian soldiers remained loyal to their oath: they fought valiantly to the last drop of blood and all fell in the battlefield. The feeling of duty to comrades was stronger for them than the fear of death.

The actions of the Pskov militia in 1343 were a vivid example of the carrying out of military duty and discipline in combat. A detachment of Livonian Knights attacked Izborsk. On the eve of the battle, the Pskov people, having assembled the veche, vowed: "Brothers, men of Pskov, do not defame our fathers and grandfathers, he who is elder is the father and he who is younger the brother; our choice is life or death and let us do our utmost...for the fatherland."¹⁰ The Livonian Knights were defeated and pushed back from the Russian frontier.

During the third decade of the 13th Century, the Mongol-Tatar troops appeared on the frontiers of the Russian lands. At the military council the Russian princes decided to act jointly against the enemy. The forces of the enemies were approximately equal, but command of the troops and the state of the discipline of the military leaders differed sharply. Rigid discipline reigned in the Mongol-Tatar troops which were divided into tens, hundreds, thousands and tumen (10,000 soldiers). For the cowardice of a single warrior in battle, the entire ten were killed and for the cowardice of ten a hundred were punished. This law also extended to the superior command personnel. No one had the right to disobey his superior. Any chief positioned with his troops in a designated place could not leave it without permission even to provide help to another. No one should accept help. A violator was condemned to the death penalty. As a rule, the top leader of the fighters did not participate in battle. He controlled the troops following the course of the engagement from a hill.

In the Russian troops, each prince took an independent decision and the retinue, obeying the feudal code of honor, were obliged to remain loyal to it. If a prince raised his banner which was not only a means of command but also a symbol of honor and glory, his retinue entered battle and defended the banner to the last. A broken staff meant the death of the military leader or a defeat. If the prince lowered his battle banner, the members of the retinue did not enter the engagement. The isolated actions of the princes told on the results of the battle against the Mongol-Tatars on the Kalka River in 1223. The retinue fought without coordination. The Kievan Prince Mstislav did not raise his banner. He and his strongest retinue sat idle while the soldiers of the other Russian princes perished. After their defeat, the Kievans entered battle independently. Regardless of defending themselves bravely, the invaders were victorious. The battle on the Kalka again showed how dangerous it was to fight separately. The lack of discipline and unity was the reason for the harsh defeat of the Russian retinue. However the princes did not learn this lesson. In 1237, the Mongol-Tatar troops of Batu descended on Russia. The Russian principalities, regardless of the heroic resistance of the people, were laid waste. Due to the lack of coordination of the military forces, Russia was the victim of the conquerors. The Russian democrat N.V. Shelgunov correctly pointed out: "The people did

their job, they stood courageously against the enemy and died bit by bit; but the princes called up by the nation for leadership did not carry out their duties and killed Russia."¹¹

The overthrow of the foreign suppression became an urgent historical task for the Russian people. In the second half of the 14th Century, Moscow began an outright struggle to overthrow the yoke of the Horde. This task was successfully carried out by the Muscovite Prince Dmitriy Ivanovich Donskoy (1350-1389). Relying on the support of the masses of people, he firmly carried out a policy of unification. In 1371, all the inhabitants of the city took an oath of loyalty to the prince. Four years later (in 1375), under the pressure of the Tver veche, Prince Mikhail Tverskoy accepted to be the junior brother of the Muscovite prince. The prominent Muscovite magnate I.V. Velyaminov, after an attempt to cause an internecine struggle went over to the Golden Horde. In 1378, he secretly returned to Russia but was captured in Serpukhov and then publically executed in Moscow. This was the first time that such a punishment was employed for such actions.

In 1377, a large detachment of the Golden Horde under the chief Arab Shakh (Arpashi) was advancing toward the frontiers of the Nizhniy Novgorod principality from the southwest. A Russian force was sent to meet it. However, the captains showed negligence as they disregarded reconnaissance and security: "The feudal nature of the war was felt in the disregard of military discipline by the boyars."¹² In taking advantage of this, the troops of the Horde secretly came out in the Russian rear and on the Pyane River launched a surprise attack against them. Caught unaware, the troops were defeated.

Dmitriy Ivanovich Donskoy considered the bitter lesson. In 1378, the troops of the Horde under the leadership of Murza Begich undertook another raid into Russian lands. The troops of the prince met them on the Vozhe River fully armed and routed them completely. The greater strength of Moscow alarmed the actual ruler of the Golden Horde Mamai. He began preparations for a major campaign against Russia. In that terrible hour, Dmitriy Donskoy showed exceptional energy in organizing the rebuff of the Horde. He was able to unite the forces of the people to rebuff the invasion. Upon the appeal from the prince, military detachments and militias of peasantry and city dwellers began to assemble in Moscow. All Russia rose to fight the hated enemy. The Grand Duke of Moscow skillfully employed the high morale and strength of the people. His troops were reinforced by a Novgorod militia which had arrived contrary to the will of its feudal rulers who had strained relations with Moscow.

The campaign of the Russians against the enemy was carried out in an exemplary manner. The Mongol-Tatars learned about the approach of the prince's troops only when they began crossing the Don. In the Battle of Kulikovo of 1380, the control of battle, the discipline,

the choice of the moment of the attack, the positioning of the troops (a general and special reserves) and their prompt entry into battle showed the superiority of Russian military art. Before the start of the battle in the Grand Regiment the Grand Duke's red banner was raised, the symbol of the honor and glory of the joint Russian troops. Dmitriy Ivanovich himself inspected the regiments and urged the men to stand to the death, defending their fatherland. On the Kulikovo Field, the Golden Horde was dealt a very strong blow which marked the beginning to the complete liberation of the Russian and other peoples of Eastern Europe from the Mongol-Tatar yoke. This battle showed the tenacity and discipline of the Russian soldiers, the morale and moral energy of which were the foundation of military discipline based not on orders but rather on indoctrination and the feelings of honor.

The Russian state was formed in the fight against the nomadic peoples, the German and Swedish interventionists and the Mongol-Tatar yoke. Military traditions were created in the hardships, patriotism, steadfastness and endurance were developed, and a feeling of comradeship and mutual aid were instilled—these basic elements in the discipline and battleworthiness of any troops. These qualities were also reflected in Russian military art.

The rise and existence of the Ancient Russian state and the formation of a unified Russian state occurred in an unceasing struggle against enemy encirclement. The situation itself forced the Russian man to always be ready to defend the fatherland and repulse invasion. According to the ancient custom in moments of danger each family sent its sons, with the exception of the youngest, into battle. Refusal to serve the fatherland was considered a disgrace. The environment shaped the military defenders of the homeland. Homogeneous in their national composition and united by a common aim, the Russian troops did not require special military legislation regulating the conduct of the soldier in battle. Discipline was maintained by an oral oath-promise and this in turn was based upon the decisions of the people's veche and the military councils issued to each warrior. Discipline was strong in an awareness of the duty to the people and the motherland.

In the moments of terrible danger hanging over the Russian state, one could clearly see the activeness of the masses of people. When the Polish-Swedish interventionists attacked the country, the Nizhniy Novgorod veche in 1612 proclaimed: "We must stand unswervingly for the truth, we must be obedient and humble to the chiefs and resist them in no way..."¹³ Relying on the support of the people, the patriots Kuzma Minin and Dmitriy Pozharskiy cleared the Russian land of the interventionists.

Military traditions have had an enormous influence on the system of indoctrinating the Russian Regular Army in Petrine and subsequent times. Conscious discipline

was shown by the peoples of our nation during years of harsh testing. Each generation of our motherland has had its Ice Slaughter, Kulikovo Field and Dubosekovo Siding. The victory of the Soviet people in the Civil and Great Patriotic Wars would have been inconceivable without military discipline, for "war is war and it requires iron discipline."¹⁴ The qualitatively new type of discipline was based primarily on the awareness of the workers of the Soviet nation defending their fatherland. V.I. Lenin spoke about this: "The basic condition for the employment and maintaining of our strictest discipline is dedication: all the old means and sources of employing discipline have been destroyed and our activities are based solely on a high degree of awareness and consciousness."¹⁵

The turning to the distant military past is not only of scientific-cognitive but also practical importance. "To maintain our heritage," V.I. Lenin taught, "in no way means to limit oneself in heritage...."¹⁶

Footnotes

1. "Povest vremennykh let" [Tales of Old Times], Moscow-Leningrad, Izd-vo AN SSSR, Part 1, 1950, p 248.
2. Ibid.
3. D.S. Likhachev, "Natsionalnoye samosoznaniye Drevney Rusi" [National Self-Awareness of Ancient Russia], Moscow-Leningrad, Azd-vo AN SSSR, 1945, p 23.
4. I.Y. Budovnits, "Vladimir Monomakh and His Military Doctrine," ISTORICHESKIYE ZAPISKI, Izd-vo AN SSSR, Vol 22, 1947, p 92.
5. "Povest vremennykh let," Part 1, pp 358-359.
6. Ibid., pp 356-357.
7. D.S. Likhachev, "Russkiye letopisi i ikh kulturno-istoricheskoye znacheniye" [Russian Chronicles and Their Cultural-Historical Significance], Moscow-Leningrad, Izd-vo AN SSSR, 1947, p 127.
8. A.N. Krupichnikov, "Voyennoye delo na Rusi v XIII-XV vv." [Military Affairs in Russia in the 8-15th Centuries], Leningrad, Nauka, 1976, p 9.
9. In the book "Issledovaniye 'Slova o polku Igoreve': Sbornik Statey" [Research on the 'Song of Igor's Campaign': Collection of Articles], Leningrad, Nauka, 1986, p 76.
10. "Polnoye sobraniye russkikh letopisey (PSRL)" [Complete Collection of Russian Chronicles (PSRL). The Pskov Chronicles], Moscow, Izd-vo AN SSSR, No 2, 1955, p 97.

11. N.V. Shegunov, "Russia Before Peter I," RUSSKOYE SLOVO, No 1-2, 1864, p 25.

12. B.A. Rybakov, "Military Art," "Ocherki russkoy kultury XIII-XV vekov" [Essays on Russian Culture of the 13th-15th Centuries], Moscow, Izd-vo MGU, Part 1, 1969, p 383.

13. PSRL, Moscow, Nauka, Vol XIV, 1965, pp 116-117.

14. V.I. Lenin, PSS [Complete Collected Works], Vol 40, p 178.

15. Ibid., p 282.

16. Ibid., Vol 2, p 542.

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Council of Worker and Peasant Defense
00010004m Moscow VOYENNO-ISTORICHESKIY
ZHURNAL in Russian No 11, Nov 88 (signed to press
26 Oct 88) pp 90-91

[Article, published under the heading "Military History Dates and Events," by Lt Col V.N. Maltsev: "The Council of Worker and Peasant Defense (On the 70th Anniversary of Its Formation)"]

[Text] On 30 November 1918, the All-Russian Central Executive Committee (VTsIK) adopted a decree on the formation of the Council of Worker and Peasant Defense. This, in particular, said: "Not only in the Army and Navy but also in food and transport matters as well as in the area of the defense industry, a military regime should be instituted...corresponding to the status of the nation which the bandits of imperialism have caused to be turned into a military camp...and there must be the closest unity of the defense department, the Extraordinary Commission for Production, as well as the railroad and food agencies in common work for the sake of the general practical tasks.... For this purpose the VTsIK decrees the establishing of the Council of Worker and Peasant Defense under the chairmanship of Comrade Lenin.... The Defense Council is granted full rights in mobilizing the forces of the nation in the interests of defense. The rulings of the Defense Council are unconditionally obligatory for all central and local agencies and institutions and for all citizens."¹

The members of the Council were: from the VTsIK I.V. Stalin, from the republic Revolutionary-Military Council [RVS] E.M. Sklyanskiy, from the People's Commissariat of Railroads V.I. Nevskiy, from the People's Commissariat of Food N.P. Bryukhanov and from the Extraordinary Commission for Red Army Supply L.B. Krasin. Depending upon the agenda, invited to the council sessions were representatives of the various agencies and in the aims of greater efficiency in resolving individual questions, commissions were set up and their

decisions after signature by V.I. Lenin and by a representative of the appropriate department assumed the force of the decrees of the Defense Council.² When immediate and extreme measures were required, the latter recruited, approved and sent out its extraordinary representatives from whence the alarms had come.

In seeking the effective execution of the set tasks by the leading workers, V.I. Lenin insisted upon the employment of extreme measures, demanding the merciless punishment of unconscientious and dishonest workers. In a letter to a member of the RVS of the Caspian-Caucasian Front on 12 December 1918, V.I. Lenin issued the following instructions: "Make every effort to catch and execute the Astrakhan speculators and bribe-takers. We must deal with these bastards in a way that this is remembered for years."³

Even the first sessions in December 1918 discussed the question "Of Setting the Size of the Red Army in Accord With the Republic's Resources."⁴ A plan was approved for organizing an army of 1.5 million. A result of the fruitful activities by the Communist Party and the Soviet government was the steady rise in the size of the Red Army (by the summer of 1919 it was over 2 million men and by the end of 1919 over 3 million). The sessions of the Defense Council systematically examined questions related to the constituting of Red Army and Navy units and their shifting to crucial sectors of the Civil War.

The Defense Council did colossal work to train combat reserves, command personnel and to recruit the generals, admirals and officers from the old army and navy into the Red Army and Navy. For example, on 12 January 1919, the agenda of its section included the point "On the Use of Military Specialists," on 3 March "On Inducting Into the Red Army Officers of the Old Army and Their Placement" and on 7 April "On Inducting Former Officers of the Navy and the Navy Corps." In June 1919, a decree was issued according to which the former officers from all institutions without exception were to be mobilized into the Red Army and Navy.

The Defense Council paid particularly close attention to the questions of increasing the output of weapons and ammunition. Information on the operation of the Tula Cartridge and Weapons Plants, the Izhevskiy, Simbirsk and Lugansk Cartridge Plants was examined systematically. On 5 December 1918, a special commission was organized in the aims of improving cartridge supply and a decision was taken to increase the productivity of the weapons and cartridge plants of Tula, Podolsk and Simbirsk. On 18 December, a decree was handed down on building a new cannon plant in the Volga area, and on 25 December, a report was heard by the chief of the Main Artillery Directorate "On the Supply State of Our Army With Weapons and on Production Capability." On 19 May 1919, upon a report by F.E. Dzerzhinskiy, a decision was taken "On the Removal of Weapons From the Nation." The listed measures provided positive results. If, for example, the Tula Plant in July 1918 had

produced a little more than 8,000 rifles, the figure in 1919 was already 24,000. Average monthly cartridge output at the plant increased from 13.2 million units in November 1918 to 20.3 million in 1919.⁵ Rifle and cartridge production increased just as rapidly at the other plants of the nation.

In being concerned with solving military economic and organizational problems, the Defense Council provided direct strategic leadership over the troops on the fronts and carefully followed the prompt concentration and correct use of the reserves on the major strategic axes.

Due to the active intervention of the Defense Council it was possible to prevent the serious consequences which could have arisen from the incorrect policy of the Petrograd Defense Committee headed by Zinovyev and which had issued orders to evacuate the plants and factories working for the defense of Petrograd and discuss the question of scuttling the fleet. The Council categorically prohibited the evacuation and cancelled the criminal plan to sink the Baltic Fleet.⁶ At the same time, it issued orders to send the best units from the Eastern Front to the Petrograd Front. Having learned that the Republic RVS was not promptly carrying out this instruction, V.I. Lenin in a note to E.M. Sklyanskiy on 11 June 1919 demanded: "It is imperative now to assign (and complete) an investigation of who led you astray, in reducing the disaster. Certainly this is treason.... It is essential to take every measure and particularly monitor the rapid movement of the six regiments from the Eastern Front."⁷

The implacability of the Defense Council and V.I. Lenin personally for those who endeavored not to carry out its collective decisions and directives can be seen from a letter sent on 17 June 1919 to the RKP(b) [Russian Communist Party (Bolshevik)] Central Committee. This sharply criticized L.D. Trotskiy who had come out against the decision of the RKP(b) Central Committee of 15 June on strengthening the Headquarters of the High Command, and points to the inadmissibility of ignoring the will of a majority of the Central Committee members. On 6 September, the Defense Council discussed the proposal of L.D. Trotskiy, L.P. Serebryakov and M.M. Lashevich to change the strategic plan for fighting against Denikin and which had been adopted by the Defense Council and approved by the party Central Committee. In a letter to the member of the Republic RVS S.I. Gusev of 16 September 1918, V.I. Lenin, in pointing out major omissions in the leadership of the military operations by the Republic RVS, emphasized the inadmissibility of weakening supervision over the execution of the adopted decisions and pointed out: "While this is our common error, in military affairs this is outright death."⁸ At the beginning of September 1919, when the situation on the Southern Front had deteriorated sharply, Lenin wrote a note to the Deputy Chairman of the Republic RVS E.M. Sklyanskiy with a

proposal "to accelerate as much as possible the sending of the two divisions from Perm," "and watch the south, talking twice a day with Gusev."⁹

The diverse activities of the Defense Council, like the other bodies, were carried out under the direct leadership of the party Central Committee. In emphasizing the role of the Central Committee in directing national defense, V.I. Lenin at the 8th RKP(b) Congress said: "At each Central Committee session for each major strategic question there was not a single time when there was not a Central Committee session, or for the Central Committee Buro there was not a time when we did not resolve the main questions of strategy."¹⁰

After the end of the Civil War, the Council of Worker and Peasant Defense, upon the initiative of V.I. Lenin, was turned into the Labor and Defense Council and this he announced on 31 March 1920 at the 9th RKP(b) Congress. The rich experience of the Defense Council was creatively employed during the years of the Great Patriotic War in the work of the State Defense Committee which played an enormous role in achieving victory over Nazi Germany and militaristic Japan. Under present-day conditions, on the basis of Article 121 of the USSR Constitution, a Defense Council is active in the nation and in the Armed Forces and its activities are aimed at further strengthening the defense capability of our state and improving the USSR Armed Forces.

Footnotes

1. "Sobraniye zakononiy i rasporyazheniy Raboche-Krestyanskogo pravitelstva" [Collection of Legislation and Orders of the Worker-Peasant Government], 22 December 1918, No 91-92, p 1144.
2. TsPA IML [Central Party Archives of the Marxism-Leninism Institute], folio 19, inv. 3, file 1, sheet 5.
3. "Leninskiy sbornik" [Leninist Collection], Moscow, Gospolitizdat, Vol XXXIV, 1942, p 65.
4. TsPA IML, folio 19, inv. 3, file 5, sheet 1.
5. TsGASA [Central State Archives of the Soviet Army], folio 33987, inv. 2, file 72, sheets 124, 167.
6. "Vladimir Ilich Lenin. Biograficheskaya khronika 1870-1924" [Vladimir Ilich Lenin. Biographic Chronicle 1870-1924], Moscow, Politizdat, Vol 7, 1976, p 194.
7. "Leninskiy sbornik," Moscow, Gospolitizdat, Vol XXXV, 1945, pp 67- 68.
8. V.I. Lenin, PSS [Complete Collected Works], Vol 51, p 50.
9. "Vladimir Ilich Lenin....," Vol 7, p 47.

10. "Leninskiy sbornik," Moscow, Politizdat, Vol 37, 1970, p 137.

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Battle Order

00010004n Moscow VOYENNO-ISTORICHESKIY
ZHURNAL in Russian No 11, Nov 88 (signed to press
26 Oct 88) pp 94-95

[Article, published under the heading "From the Archives of the USSR Ministry of Defense," by Col G.T. Khoroshilov, winner of the USSR State Prize and the M.V. Frunze Prize, candidate of military sciences, docent: "A Battle Order"]

[Text] Recently, certain historians, journalists and writers have focused universal attention on Order No. 227 of the USSR People's Commissar of Defense of 28 July 1942. The impression is created that prior to its appearance in the operational army no thought had been given to the words "Not a Step to the Rear" or their meaning. However, we, the participants of the war, also knew earlier orders of this sort which were issued under the difficult conditions of conducting a strategic defensive.

Such orders were issued on the fronts, in the armies, divisions and in the inferior levels, both in writing and even orally. The situation which impelled this usually was characterized by the development of a particularly crisis situation, when the executors did not have any time for reflection, and it was essential immediately and accurately to carry out the commander's instructions in order that a battle not fail or an operation not be stopped. Naturally, the words for this were harsh, cruel, just as the reality of armed combat itself is harsh and cruel and even included such words: "stand to the death," "we will die but we will carry out the mission" and so forth. At times, it was essential to stand and hold a line at whatever the cost in one place in order to achieve success in another.

What does it mean "to stand to the death"? This meant to carry out the task, one's duty under any circumstances, and if need be, at the price of your own life. And they carried it out. And they achieved victories, bending all their forces and showing strength of spirit combined with combat skill. This was the case in 1941, at Brest and Odessa, at Leningrad, at Sevastopol, at Moscow and on many other sectors of the front.

One generally knows what a difficult situation had developed in mid- September 1941 around Leningrad where I happened to be a participant and witness of events¹ relating to the repelling of the first assault on the city by troops of the enemy 4th Panzer Group and 18th Army. The men of the front and the fleet made seemingly every effort to prevent the enemy from reaching Leningrad but still under enemy blows step by step they retreated, giving up position after position. Why? Seemingly, there were strong forces for the successful conduct

of a defensive, there were enough weapons, but what was lacking was organization, discipline and steadfastness, the more skillful employment of weapons and the prompt detection of the enemy's plans.... But the retreat was more and more "draining" and became a "chronic illness" in the course of which there occurred both spontaneous retreats which sometimes developed into flight from the battlefield by individual soldiers or even groups as well as insufficiently energetic actions by the commanders (political workers) with the rise of panic. The enemy was coming closer and closer to the city....

Suddenly the command of the front was changed: in the place of K.Ye. Voroshilov they appointed G.K. Zhukov who was well known even then from the events in Khalkhin-Gol and a talented military leader. Arriving with him were the new chief of staff of the front, M.S. Khozin and the hero of Khalkhin-Gol, I.I. Fedyuninskiy, who had become the commander of the 42d Army.

Taking over on 10 September, Zhukov, regardless of the pessimistic assessment of the situation around Leningrad on the part of the Moscow leadership, felt that not everything was yet lost. He viewed "the situation as critical but assumed that there were still unused opportunities and determined to defend Leningrad to the last drop of blood."²

Experience suggested to Zhukov that there were the means but what was lacking was a moral and psychological attitude. Certain commanders did not show the requisite decisiveness to check the negative actions of subordinates. A psychological change was essential! It was essential to return to the troops a confidence in their own forces and capabilities in order to halt the enemy. The harsh order of the front's military council of 17 September 1941 marked the beginning to such a change.³

TO THE MILITARY COUNCILS OF THE 42D AND 55TH ARMIES

Battle Order to the Troops of the Leningrad Front 17 Sep 41

Map 100,000

1. Considering the particular important significance of the line Ligovo, Kiskin, Verkh. Koyrovo, the Pulkov Hills, the area of Moskovskaya Slavyanka, Shushary, Kopino in defending the southern part of Leningrad, the Military Council of the Leningrad Front orders the announcement to all command, political and rank-and-file personnel defending the designated line that all commanders, political workers and soldiers are subject to immediate execution for leaving the designated line without written orders from the military council of the front and army.

2. The current order is to be signed for by the command and political personnel. The rank-and-file will have it widely explained.

3. Execution of the order is to be reported in code by 1200 hours on 18 September 1941.

[Signed by the following:]

Commander of Leningrad Front, Hero of the Soviet Union, Army Gen Zhukov; Chief of Staff of the Leningrad Front, Lt Gen Khozin; Member of the Military Council of the Leningrad Front, Secretary of VKP(b) Central Committee, Zhdanov; Military Council Member of Leningrad Front, Division Commissar, Kuznetsov.

However, the matter was not limited to merely issuing the order. At the same time, the requirements of the order were reinforced by a number of measures to increase the art of organizing and activating the defenses on the southern approaches to the city. This involved the digging (equipping) of full-depth trenches and communications trenches, the reinforcing of antitank defenses and the organizing of a centrally controlled artillery grouping with the broad involvement of the powerful naval guns, the skillful employment of aviation and the national air defense facilities, the constituting of new formations and the organizing of a defense in depth, increasing the activeness of the 8th Army on the Oranienbaum bridgehead and so forth.

Particular attention was also given to establishing an insurmountable antitank defense. For this purpose the combating of enemy tanks was to involve all the anti-aircraft batteries of the first line and part of the city's air defense system. This was a risk but it was a justified risk. As a result, in the zone of the 42d Army which was on the axis of the main enemy thrust, an average density unprecedented for that period was able to be established: 10-15 antitank weapons per kilometer and this made it possible to cause heavy losses to the 4th Panzer Group. At the same time, it was possible to increase the survivability of the antitank weapons, regardless of the capture of the prevailing heights by the enemy. For each of them they built a covered ramp-type shelter.

As a result of the strong, stubborn and active defense by the Soviet troops the enemy suffered losses, the fighting assumed an extended nature and the last 4-5 km to the walls of the city were impassable for the Nazis for the entire next 2 1/2 years of the war.

The Command of the German Wehrmacht, having accepted the hopelessness of the fight and the collapse of the plans to capture Leningrad without a halt, was forced to shift its main strike force, the 4th Panzer Group, to the Moscow sector. Thus, the situation at Leningrad changed sharply in favor of the troops of the front and the fleet.

Thus, the enemy was finally stopped! Here an important role was played by that harsh order issued on 17 September 1941, on one of the critical days in repelling the

first assault by the enemy. This order was essential at that time around Leningrad in order to help then stop the Nazi plans around Moscow.

Did I witness the punishing of the violators of the order's requirements?

Yes, I did! Twice. But this was a severe cautioning for many so that they would be able to find the strength and will power in themselves, not give way to panic, not to be a coward and to carry out their military duty completely.

Footnotes

1. Upon recovering from wounding in August 1941, the author was appointed the deputy chief of the artillery staff of the 3d Guards People's Militia Division (later, the 44th Rifle Division) of Leningrad.

2. G.K. Zhukov, "Vospominaniya i razmyshleniya" [Recollections and Reflections], Moscow, Izd-vo APN, 2d Edition, Vol 2, 1974, p 395.

3. TsAMO SSSR [Central Archives of the USSR Ministry of Defense], folio 249, inv. 1544, file 12, sheet 144. Original.

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Publication Data

00010004p Moscow VOYENNO-ISTORICHESKIY
ZHURNAL in Russian No 11, Nov 88 (signed to press
26 Oct 88

English title: MILITARY HISTORY JOURNAL

Russian title: VOYENNO-ISTORICHESKIY ZHURNAL

Editor-in-Chief: V.I. Filatov

Publishing house: Krasnaya Zvezda

Place of publication: Moscow

Date of publication: November 1988

Signed to press: 26 October 1988

Copies:

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